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*A Psychoanalytic Journal
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"Pregnancy Envy"

in Rainer Maria Rilke

by

Erich Simenauer, M.D.

In his book "The Forgotten Language" (1) Erich Fromm challenges, among others, Freud's assumption that "penis envy" is a regularly recognizable phenomenon in the constitution of the woman's psyche. In this repudiation of one intrinsically important notion among the original psycho-analytical concepts, Fromm does not stand alone (2); but whereas elsewhere the objection to Freud's principle of the identity of psychic experiences with the infant boy as well as with the young girl stems mostly either from emotional doubts — the most serious allegation being that Freud's mind was incapable of understanding the soul of woman — or from that psychologically weak last ditch of reasoning which cloaks as common sense, Fromm puts forward some tangible evidence upon which to base his assumption. According to him, there exists in contrast to Freud's opinion of a "penis envy" in the female, originally rather "pregnancy envy" in the male. He refers to the Babylonian Myth of Creation which tells us of a victorious rebellion of male Gods under Marduk against the great mother Tiamat who ruled the universe (3). This ancient legend serves as an illustration of the emergence of patriarchy from matriarchal forms of social organisation and of religious orientation, as has been expounded by Bachofen, in his studies of Greek Mythology (4). But while Bachofen assumed that the last fight between the maternal goddesses and the victorious paternal gods was represented in the Oresteia of Aischylos, more recent studies of the problem tend to show that the last impact of the matriarchal principle upon the history of Western civilisation was

brought about by the Etruscans in middle Italy (5); the defeat of that mysterious people by the Romans, the most obvious and most unbending representatives of the patriarchal principle constitutes the final chapter of a struggle which goes back to prehistoric times: the deep male-female antagonism of which the first one recorded might have been that between Marduk and Tiamat.

However this may be, the Babylonian Myth (Enuma Elish) if we follow Fromm, makes it abundantly clear that an essential prerequisite of the victory of the male gods was a proof from their side that they were not inferior to woman in one essential aspect: in the gift of natural creation. Women can bear children, men are sterile in this respect. Of course, we know that the male sperm is equally essential for the creation of progeny as is the female egg but Fromm rightly reminds us that this knowledge is rather on the level of a modern scientific statement than on that of an obvious recognisable fact, like pregnancy or child-birth, or, we may say, it does not necessarily follow from sensory data. Indeed, we must take cognisance of the fact that this knowledge is a relative newcomer to the store of popular enlightenment on the subject of procreation, and was equally non-existent in the childhood of the human race as it is lacking in the infancy of modern man. Freud points out (6) that the child of 10-11 years, though having acquired a great deal of sexual enlightenment, still remains unaware of the existence and purpose of the sperm; lacking further information or in the event of strong sex repression, this incomplete knowledge may persist throughout the later life, or part of the life, of the individual. This fixation to an infantile stage of development is recognizable in entire communities in archaic epochs of humanity as can be seen, for instance, from ancient myths of which that of Perseus is one example (7). In some contemporary primitive tribes this period still exists. B. Malinowski (8) was surprised to find among the natives of the Trobriand Islands complete ignorance of the significance of co-habitation for child-creation. We may, then, well assume that in ancient Babylonian prehistoric

times when the Enuma Elish myth was born, there was the same lack of knowledge inherent in the creators of that myth.

Marduk therefore had, in order to defeat the mother-goddess, to prove that he was equal to Tiamat in that he also was able to create — though in a different fashion, i.e. by the power of thought, by his word and command. But, concludes Fromm, — to take up our thread again — before male supremacy was established man was bound to develop "pregnancy-envy" as women were then the all-powerful rulers of society, much in the same way as, according to Freud, in female infants "penis-envy" can be traced to the superior status of man and his sexual organs. Such was Freud's notion which has been likened to one of the basic assumptions of the Victorian era (9), and accordingly used by some authors to demonstrate an alleged cultural handicap in Freud.

Now, it must be emphasised that nothing in the concept of pregnancy-envy invalidates the original Freudian idea of penis-envy so long as one does not claim universal validity of either, in an abstract sense, in a sphere where only statistical statements (in the sense of physical science) is all we can achieve. Furthermore, both penis- and pregnancy-envy are not mutually exclusive even if, as Fromm seems to imply, the latter was historically established first; granted this, we must in any event reckon in terms of literally thousands of generations in the development of mankind, during which, after the emergence of patriarchy, penis-envy could develop in the female. No one can be dogmatic on a subject of which we know very little.

On theoretical grounds, three considerations present themselves as to the formation of pregnancy-envy. It may be a rather curious sequel of castration-fear. The infant boy who is resigned to this threatening fate tries, as it were, to make the best of his becoming like a woman. For it will be recalled that this is how he at first interpreted the external female genitals, i.e. as the result of actual castration. Or pregnancy-envy may perhaps occur as one of the components of sadistic-masochistic impulses within the framework of infantile narcissism with which it would seem at least not to

be inconsistent. Thirdly, pregnancy-envy may develop in the course of identification processes with the mother or a person who stands for her. Thus, with the recognition of pregnancy-envy the original concepts of Psycho-analysis need not be transgressed. On the other hand, the notion of pregnancy-envy as a primary psychic drive involves the acceptance of a new principle.

But if we do not know as yet either its causes or its origin, a case has been made out for the *existence* of pregnancy-envy.

The validity of the whole concept depends, of course, on the demonstration whether pregnancy-envy can be traced empirically in the psychic constitution of modern man, and actually demonstrated in psycho-analytic operations. So far, individual statements have failed to gain general recognition among analysts, as they are few and carry with them an arbitrary factor. (9a) If it can be shown that pregnancy-envy does exist in an outstanding and generally known contemporary personality, in an artist of world fame who exhibits this trait in his creative work for all to see, the validity of the concept would be strengthened to a considerable degree which is equivalent to the amount by which the inherent subjective factor is eliminated by way of general concordance.

To this end, it is proposed to examine the writings of the poet, Rainer Maria Rilke. It will be seen that the unveiling of pregnancy-envy in him hardly involves any specific psycho-analytic evaluation proper and that it will be obvious even to the most orthodox of Freudians.

Rilke's longing for the productive fulfilment of existence which by nature has been reserved for the female sex can, in my opinion, be observed in his most personal and intimate thoughts as well as in his poetic work, prose and lyrics. Even in his intellectualising pursuits where he was always prone to give himself a pontifical air and to dogmatise his obiter dicta, he strongly emphasises the idea that man is able to participate in that mysterious recreative faculty. In the series of letters which are known as "Letters to a young

poet" (10), he lectures his correspondent (11) on sex and the mysteries of its experiences and pontifies in the following terms: ". . . . for creative work too springs from the physical, is of one nature with it and only like a gentler, more ecstatic and more everlasting repetition of physical delight." In this statement the reader will recognise the influence of Nietzsche's remark: "Chastity is nothing but the economy of the artist. It is one and the same energy one spends by conceiving a work of art or in sexual activity. There exists only one kind of energy." (12)

But Rilke significantly adds to this trend of thought the following:

"The thought of being creator, of procreating, of making, is nothing without its continuous great confirmation and realization in the world, nothing without the thousandfold concordance of things and animals — and enjoyment of it is so indescribably beautiful and rich only because it is full of inherited memories of the conceiving and the bearing of millions. In one creative thought a thousand forgotten nights of love revive and fill it with sublimity and exaltation.

"And those who come together in the night and are entwined in rocking delight do an earnest work and gather depth and strength for the song of some coming poet, who will arise to speak of ecstasies beyond telling. And call up the future; and though they err and embrace blindly, the future comes all the same, a new human being rises up, and upon the ground of chance that seems here to have happened, awakes the law by which a resistant powerful seed forces its way through to the egg-cell that moves open towards it. Do not be bewildered by the surfaces; in the depths all becomes law. And those who live the secret wrong and badly (and there are many), lose it only for themselves and still hand it on, like a sealed letter, without knowing it. And do not be confused by the multitude of names and the complexity of cases. Perhaps over all there is a great motherhood, like a common longing. The beauty of the virgin, a being "that (as you so beautifully say) has not yet achieved anything", is motherhood that begins to sense itself and to prepare, is fearful and desirous. And the mother's beauty is ministering motherhood, and in the old woman is a great remembering. And even in the man there is motherhood, it seems to me, bodily

and mental; his procreating is also a kind of bearing, and bearing it is when he creates out of his inmost fullness. And perhaps the sexes are more related than we think, and the great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this, that man and maid, freed of all false feeling and aversion, will seek each other not as opposites, but as brother and sister, as neighbors, and will come together as human beings, in order simply, seriously and patiently to bear in common the difficult generation that is their burden."

It is not hard to discover, in these sophisticated utterances, the emotional tendencies at work in Rilke, and in this light they appear as rationalizations of profound urges in him. They make their appearance already in his early work, almost simultaneously with the great transformation of his personality which took place through his encounter with Lou Andreas-Salomé, in 1897. To her influence has to be attributed nothing less than the transformation of the young versemaker, René, into the poet, Rainer Maria. The first fruit of his newly won awareness of his inner self, which he presented to Lou in worship and devotion was his "Tuscan Diary" (13). This amazing document reveals, among others, a deep-seated hidden wish in the young poet: "Often I feel a great longing for myself. I know the road is long; but in my best dreams I can foresee the day when I will conceive myself." (14)

Here, the longing for conception and pregnancy, is expressed in stark terms. We witness in these lines his unconscious breaking surface. His innermost nature speaks in no uncertain way and divulges his sexual ambivalence, a life-long fixed bias of his (15). So apparent was this trait in him that his intimate friend, Lou Andreas-Salomé, the writer and psycho-analyst, in her "Memoirs on Rilke" (16) coins the phrase of his "uncommunicable longing for pregnancy"; and of the body of his work she says, he considered it as "something ejected from himself" (17) which "he brought forth from his internal self" (18). Thus this work he gave birth to, bears witness to his hybrid character (19): "in Rilke both sexes unite into an entity" (20). It was

Rilke's notion that both woman and man desire labor and delivery (21). "We all bear something like anxiety in us. We shall be like mothers. But as yet we are like maidens, with hot hands and wishful dreams; but ye harken to my voice: We shall be like mothers." (21a) Of himself, he speaks often as the "conceiving" ("Empfangender") (22), and of the "birth" of his poems, especially in connection with the "Duino Elegies". In this idea, Lou confirms him in one of her letters, warning him of the reaction which might follow the birth of his "Duino Elegies". She says: "Exactly that is what the Marias feel after they have given birth—incomprehensible to their carpenters." (23) In 1925 Rilke expressly includes his "Sonnets to Orpheus" in the same process: "The Sonnets to Orpheus . . . are . . . of the same "delivery" as the Elegies," (23a) and the depth of his preoccupation with the idea of conception can be fathomed from the fact that as long ago as in the spring of 1903 he asserts that he intended at Viareggio to wait for the delivery of his "Book of Hours". (23b)

But what if he is not granted the fullness of time? In keeping with his ever present image-associations Rilke, quite in earnest, calls an interruption of his artistic "bearing" miscarriage. He says that when the continuity of his poetical creativeness was suddenly broken, he felt deeply humiliated as one might feel after a "fausse-couche", and he adds "One simply has to express it as rudely as that". (23c)

Apart from his own self, the notion of "auto-conception" ("Selbstempfang") exerts a strong and significant hold on him in his poetry. One of his most mature poems culminates in the image of the beloved woman conceiving by narcissistic auto-eroticism. (24)

He attributes to the "flower's muscle" of the Anemones the faculty of "infinite conception" (25) in his "Sonnets to Orpheus".

In the light of the foregoing, one must admit in the witicism of his friend, the poet von Wolzogen, more than a humorous paraphrase of Rilke's Christian names when he ad-

dresses him: "Pure Rainer — immaculate Maria" (26).

Rilke is, therefore, nothing but consistent when he calls the act of poetic inspiration "conception"; he says that to conceive exerts him also purely physically (27). Nor is it surprising that his lips are forming this prayer to God:

"Give the last proof unto us, make the crown of thy omnipotence appear, and bestow on us man's real motherhood (not of the kind of women's labor), install the he-man in his right as he who giveth birth: birth to Death—Messiah; fulfil his longings, for they are greater than the dream of the virgin giving birth to God." (28).

To make this possible, God Almighty is implored to create a hybrid human being possessed of a woman's lap and at the same time of the male sexual organs. These verses constitute the blasphemous prayer of a bi-sexual being longing for the appearance of the true hermaphrodite (29).

Taken in isolation and out of the context of the intricacies of his character, it seems perfectly sensible that Rilke with his pregnancy-envy should display an enormous reverence towards the phenomenon of child-bearing. In fact, one can hardly conceive of a more tender and more enrapturing poetical treatment of motherhood than is to be found in Rilke's oeuvre. There was, in his opinion, no human situation equally grandiose. Of the Virgin Mary he says: "Whilst walking she was convinced that there could be no greater exaltation than she felt then". (30). Of the imminent birth of his daughter Ruth, Rilke speaks as of a "time of grace" ('Gnadenzeit'); for him it seemed a "reality which was, in a fabulous way, connected with the miraculous from which, still being real, it can hardly be distinguished". (31)

But it would be entirely misleading to assume that Rilke really wished to pronounce the superiority of woman over man as he seemingly does so often, by word and by implication. According to him, in matters of love, in the perfection of love, woman has attained the most exalted summit. Women are the perfect, "the great lovers" (32). How paltry is man in comparison! Merely amateurishly groping his path

towards love, much in need to confess his utter failure and consciously to make a fresh start—, real beginner which he is. For the whole love has been accomplished by women; nay, they have performed the rôle of both and, throughout the centuries, recited both parts of the dialogue themselves. (33)

It would be astonishing to find such views in any self-respecting man let alone in an artist who was as self-conscious as Rilke, who prided himself greatly with his, for others unattainable, status as a poet. But herein lies, apparently paradoxically, the explanation of his attitude. Through the strange doctrines he pontifies shines his true character, and his utterances are but the wordiness of an outstanding dialectician. The first, and already decisive, dialectic twist occurs in his "Tuscan Diary" when he expounds the thesis that *one* male specimen equals the status of womanhood: namely the Artist. "Mothers are rather like artists." (33a)

Strong pregnancy-envy, by putting the emphasis on envy, leads to aggressiveness. As Butler puts it (34): "... his hushed reverence towards the phenomenon of motherhood cannot disguise the fact that in a poetical and adoring way he was relegating women to the sphere which popular prejudice has always assigned to them . . . ; since children are their work of art, they have no need (and indeed no right) to produce others." For, "however great the importance of motherhood, Rilke clearly gave the palm to art". (35). The creation of the artist is nothing more or less than the creation of God. By this step of reasoning, almost unobtrusively, the notion of the superiority of the artist over women is established.

Now the way is clear not only for the strange visions as instanced above from the "Book of Hours" but for the development of his "pathological cult of untouched virgins" (36). What then is, we may ask, the psychological significance of these notions of Rilke's, which have already been observed in the literary criticism of his work?

In the first instance, he carries the ideas of his "Tuscan Diary" to their logical conclusion. Since the artist is really

superior to child-bearing woman, Rilke sets out to convince women of the futility of competing with the artist. It stands to reason that they cannot vie with him in achievement, it is far better to abandon hope and to accept their destination which, by a peculiar dialectic distortion, is to abnegate motherhood, to die young and as virgins, uncontaminated by man. For, it is understood, the man-artist is chosen, he will give birth to the Messiah, the Death-bearer, the Redeemer of mankind.

It further follows his pregnancy-envy is so powerful that he wills that women must not share pregnancy with him. He, the artist, takes their place; in the last consequence, woman becomes superfluous in the task of creation. This attitude of his exerted a profound influence on his life; it makes itself felt as "fear and distrust of sexual love and as a morbid horror of childbirth" (37), and reverberated throughout his poetry until the end of his life.

On close inspection, Rilke's attitude is essentially the same as that of Marduk's, in the ancient Babylonian Myth of Creation. As the male gods had to assert themselves by proving that they were not inferior to the archaic mother-goddess Tiamat in the power of natural creation, so has the Artist to prove, by his deeds, that his productiveness is at least equal to that of women. Nor does the parallel to the historical development of human thought end here. We have seen that finally Rilke pronounces the superiority of the artist over women in that sphere of activity which by nature and by experience of countless generations has been unquestionably reserved for them. This knowledge has become so axiomatic that to question it seems, to say the least, as futile as it is preposterous. How then comes Rilke to pronounce an obvious absurdity? We suspect that some deep-rooted human tendency must be at work here, some psychic reality which tenaciously survives in man, by the force of emotional energies, even when confronted with a totally different world of reality. In this search we need not go far and only read on in Fromm's interpretation quoted above: "The Biblical Myth begins where the Babylonian Myth has

ended. The supremacy of a male god is established and hardly any trace of a previous matriarchal stage is left. Mar-duk's "test" has become the main theme of the Biblical story of Creation. God creates the world by his word; the woman and her creative powers are no longer necessary". Eve is born from Adam's rib. (38)

If we add the ancient Greek belief that the goddess Athene was born out of the head of Zeus, we find in these time-honoured human documents a perfect simile to Rilke's concept. It is nothing less than the most consequential refusal of woman in the role of creation, in the same way as in the history of mankind the birth from the virgin means the bluntest abnegation of man in that process, as instanced by the ancient myth of the Akkad King Sargon. This legend denies Sargon a father, he was born from a virgin, his priestess-mother (39). We must conclude that this myth was probably conceived at the height of a matriarchic cultural epoch of history, or expresses the longing for such.

Pregnancy-envy, the hidden yet powerful drive of many a man engenders by necessity similar forms and notions of expression throughout the history of man. It is not by chance that they make their most striking re-appearance in the works of the poet for, as Freud puts it, poets have the courage and the gift to let their unconscious speak aloud.

But it must not be forgotten that in spite of his changing moods and concepts, Rilke went on praising motherhood also in his later works. This ambivalence in him again corresponds to the ambivalence of mankind with regard to matriarchy and patriarchic predilections in the course of the development from the former to patriarchy. Fromm quotes the figure of Eve in the Biblical Myth as an example in point. In her we see, in spite of all, the woman superior to the male. This aspect of the respective rôles of Adam and Eve has found artistic expression in the work of John Erskine (40). Yet in all of Rilke's praises of motherhood there is recognizable an undercurrent of haughtiness: "O, you mothers of the poets. You are the beloved abodes of the gods, in whose wombs the sublime verily must have been conceived. Did you

divine their command by their voices, or did the gods communicate by mute signs?" (41). Of all mothers — those of the poets are the chosen ones.

Throughout his works, not least where we admire the consummate beauty of his verses, Rilke's archaic human situation of pregnancy-envy pervades the current of his thoughts disguised in manifold patterns and images. We can claim him as an outstanding example of the validity of this concept which has established a place in psycho-analysis.

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- (14) ibidem, p. 38 transl. by the author. Original: "Oft hab ich so grosse Sehnsucht nach mir. Ich weiss, der Weg ist noch lang: aber in meinen besten Traeumen sehe ich den Tag, da ich mich empfangen werde."

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- (17) "das aus ihm Hinausgestellte".
- (18) "das Nachaussengebrachte des Innersten", *ibidem* p. 51.
- (19) "nimmt teil an jenem Zwitterhaften", *ibidem*.
- (20) "dass sich . . . beide Geschlechtlichkeiten in eins vereinigen", *ibidem* p. 40.
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- (28) "Book of Hours" ("Das Stundenbuch"), Leipzig 1903, p. 89: Transl. by the author
 "Das letzte Zeichen lass an uns geschehen,
 erscheine in der Krone deiner Kraft,
 und gib uns jetzt (nach aller Weiber Wehen)
 des Menschen ernste Mutterschaft.
 Erfuelle, du gewaltiger Gewaehrer,
 nicht jenen Traum der Gottgebaererin,—
 richt auf den Wichtigen: den Tod-Gebaerer"
- (29) *ibidem* p. 88:
 "Mach Einen herrlich, Herr, mach Einen gross,
 bau seinem Leben einen schoenen Schoss,
 und seine Scham errichte wie ein Tor
 in einem blonden Wald von jungen Haaren,
 und ziehe durch das Glied des Unsagbaren
 den Reisigen den weissen Heeresscharen,

den tausend Samen, die sich sammeln, vor.
 Und eine Nacht gib, dass der Mensch empfinde,
 was keines Menschen Tiefen noch betrat;
 gib eine Nacht: da bluehen alle Dinge,
 und mach sie duftender als die Syringe
 und wiegender denn deines Windes Schwinge
 und jubelnder als Josaphat.
 Und gib ihm eines langen Tragens Zeit
 und mach ihn weit in wachsenden Gewaendern,
 und schenk ihm eines Sternes Einsamkeit,
 dass keines Auges Staunen ihn beschreit,
 wenn seine Zuege schmelzend sich veraendern . . ."

- (30) Original: "gehend fuehlte sie: man ueberschreitet nie die Groesse, die sie jetzt empfand." in "The Life of the Virgin Mary", transl. by R. G. L. Barrett, Wuerzburg, 1921, 4th poem: "Mariae Heimsuchung" ("Visitation"). (The present translation is by the author).
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The Function of Humor in Three Nez Perce Indian Myths

by

Dell Skeels, Ph.D.

A number of psychiatrists, among them Hartmann, Kris, Loewenstein, Ehrenzweig, and Lee have, in recent publications, (1) discussed audience responses to various art forms. Of these men, Dr. Kris has made the most elaborate study in his book, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, in which the reader can discern an implicit classification of individual and group audience responses to dramatic and narrative literature.

This classification may by inversion be used to classify literature itself in terms of the responses which it tends to induce in the audience. Such a classification which has as its ultimate basis modern psychoanalytic concepts concerning the structure and functioning of the human mind seems to me potentially very fruitful for the student of oral folk literature. In this paper I shall suggest several categories into which oral literature might thus be divided and analyze three Nez Perce tales which exemplify certain characteristics of humor, the particular category in which I am most interested.

My classification has two principal components. The first of these is concerned with the degree of empathy which the individual in the audience feels toward the work of art, or, more specifically, for oral literature, the entire story or the characters within the story. In other words, does

the member of the audience over-identify with the protagonist in the story in his situation and at the same time either because of his own sophistication or because there are elements in the personality of the protagonist which are alien or unacceptable to him does he retain what has been called aesthetic distance? Or does he fail to identify in any way — because of his own character perhaps, or because the character of the protagonist, the scene, etc., are too completely foreign to him. If this last is true, if he fails to identify at all, he is simply not interested, and is technically not really a member of the audience. In our classification of the literature we are not concerned with this third type of reaction, for no stories, so far as I know, are told for the purpose of not interesting the audience, and stories which fitted this classification would have to be considered aesthetic failures for that particular audience regardless of what they might be for some other audience. It is the reactions of the first and second type with which we are concerned here.

While the first component of this classification, the degree of empathy felt by the audience, is a familiar concept in the study of aesthetics, the second component, the quality of the empathy or identification experienced by the audience, is one which draws on Freudian psychology for its insights, and it is probably not so familiar as the first. The modern psychoanalyst agrees with aesthetic theoreticians from Aristotle forward that art is a tension-relieving device. Appreciation, as Aristotle said of tragedy, has a purging effect upon the emotions. The questions that the psychoanalyst asks are what mechanisms are involved in the release of this tension, and from what levels of the human psyche come the energies that are thus released. The answers to these questions proceed from each other. The energies are aggressive and libidinal; they are, to use Freud's terminology, id forces. They are the energies which in a transmuted state are seen in all psychic phenomena. In their primary forms, however, they are not usually allowed

to enter the conscious mind, for in such a form they represent too great a threat to the ego — the pattern-making, reality-perceiving self of the individual. Instead they are repressed into the unconscious from which they escape in symbolic forms — in the dreams, myth, and art of a people. Yet their repression is not an easy matter: the energies constantly struggle toward consciousness, while the ego and its adjunct, the super-ego, the internalized voice of society which man experiences and incorporates from birth, struggle constantly to hold them down, deny them, keep them from consciousness. The primary mechanism which the super-ego, the great opponent of the id, uses for this repression is fear. If the wishes out of infancy, wishes involving both love and hate, are allowed expression, retaliation will follow. And the deepest and most fundamental retaliation is that which threatens to sever the source of the energy itself: castration. I am not attempting to prove here that castration fear is universal; yet if Freud's division of the psyche is valid for all men, there would seem to be a good argument, as Roheim has shown, for belief in its universality. However, the Nez Perce tales which I have chosen to analyze all have castration as a part of their theme and would seem to show that castration fears were present in the Nez Perce at least.

The war between the levels of man's psyche provides the tension which art, the myth, and the dream help to alleviate. Without such outlets for tension man would be incapable of being socialized. The pressure would be too great; the id would break through and engulf the ego — as it does in the psychotic; and if this were to happen on a group level, society would disintegrate.

The tension which requires purgation is, therefore, the tension between the id and the ego and super-ego, and the acceptable mechanisms for its release are the symbol-producing activities of man.

One of such mechanisms is the oral narrative, whether told by primitive or by civilized man. Yet obviously each

narrative will vary in the way it produces a release in tension — the kind of tension it releases, predominantly libidinal or aggressive, the amount, and the extent to which the controls of the ego and super-ego are maintained throughout the narrative or are reasserted at its end. It is, of course, obvious too that each narrative will vary as well in its appeal to each individual listener. But here we are primarily interested in the narrative which seems capable of producing a particular type of emotional release rather than in the variation in emotional response which a number of individuals have to the same story. We are, in other words, presenting ourselves with a problem in literary analysis rather than a problem in psychiatry.

Let us return again to the concept of aesthetic distance. Some narratives seem designed — though probably not consciously designed — to allow the listener to feel a greater degree of identification with the principal character, the protagonist, than do other narratives. I have heard these stories referred to as “wish-fulfillment” tales, although this title might be misleading, since all stories have elements of wish-fulfillment about them on an unconscious if not a conscious level. The common characteristic of this first type of story is a relatively simple march of the protagonist through a series of difficulties to ultimate unqualified success. Most of the Märchen of our own culture fall within this category. So also do most of the “dirty boy” tales which we find in primitive cultures. The hero may come from humble origins — the little tailor, Boots, or simply the youngest son, or in another culture the tribal outcast. At any rate, he lops off the heads of giants, slays dangerous beings, may destroy or rescue the people who have looked down upon or abandoned him and if there is a beautiful woman in the story, and there often is, he wins her. The behavior of the protagonist is such that by identification with him the listener releases both libidinal and aggressive forces from the id and a minimal reassertion of the controls of the ego and the super-ego is required. The giants, evil

step-mothers or dangerous beings are destroyed, sometimes most cruelly, and the love object is won, perhaps in spite of her wishes. And no one has to pay for these acts. The audience becomes one with the hero and hostilities and desires which are socially unacceptable can escape from repression and be given vent in symbolic form.

The weakness of these stories, however, lies in the fact that they do not require the re-assertion of the ego and the super-ego. The break at the end of the narrative is abrupt. Life is not like that. They are essentially escape literature regardless of the culture in which they are found. Over-identification charges a certain price — reality may not be easier but more difficult to face after the fiction is finished. For the ego and the super-ego must return to complete control. I am I, and not Tom Thumb; and society requires that I conform with its institutions. Not only must the ego and the super-ego return to unequivocal control, but they may even require a certain payment in guilt for their temporary abdication. Therefore, in oral literature as in other art forms, man has not confined these mechanisms of tension-release simply to processes of identification with symbolic forces from the id, but has brought into the art form itself the re-assertion of controls and has even turned this re-assertion into a form of pleasure. There are two ways at least by which this process can be accomplished. One of these is through the vehicle of tragedy, which requires for its enjoyment that the listener simultaneously identify not only with the protagonist, but with the socializing forces of man as well: the ego and super-ego maintain their control by virtue of aesthetic distance. Although a part of the psyche identifies with the hero, another part assures us that we are not he, and at the end the enjoyment has come both from the dispelling of the id tensions and from the painless, even satisfying re-assertion of man's relation to society, the gods, or fate. The tragic hero is the scapegoat bearing away our guilt. There is a marked difference between the required audience response to tragedy and to

the first type of story that we defined. Considerable identification with the hero in the wish-fulfillment story is necessary for its success; in tragedy, however, while a certain amount of identification is necessary, over-identification or a failure to maintain aesthetic distance will make the tragedy too painful to be enjoyed.

A third type of narrative, and one found very often in primitive cultures, is that type which relies for the discharge of tensions on the mechanism of humor. In this kind of tale, identification with the butt of the joke can occur, but here it must in general be unconscious. If too much conscious identification with the victim of the joke occurs, the story is likely to turn into a tragedy, even though of only minor proportions; for too much sympathy with the victim of any joke effectively blocks laughter. It should be remembered that the cruelty of the joke is not necessarily a measure of the cruelty of the audience. Instead it may very well show that an effective discharge of energies which would otherwise result in cruelty is being obtained through the mechanism of humor. (2)

Humor is a particularly effective technique for the release of tensions because they may be released through identification with the anti-social, or id behavior, of the butt of the joke and also through identification with the aggressive behavior which brings the downfall of the butt of the joke and the re-assertion of the control of the super-ego.

The discharge of tensions stemming from the id through unconscious identification followed by the re-assertion of the control of the ego and super-ego through the mechanism of humor is particularly apparent in certain oral tales from the Nez Perce Indians in which Coyote, the trickster, is the protagonist. I have chosen to examine three stories from the Nez Perce tribe which have somewhat the same theme and which seem to me to exemplify the mechanisms under discussion fairly well. The theme of all three stories is real or symbolic castration. I purposely chose to examine

the stories of which castration was the theme for two reasons. First, I felt that they made more emphatic and obvious the dual pressures of the id and the super-ego within the stories. And, second, I wished to eliminate any question of whether the basic psychological fears of the Nez Perce Indian were much different from our own or not. In other words, I wished to establish the fact that castration fear was present among the Nez Perce.

Before I present the tales, however, I must first explain a little about what Coyote means to the Nez Perce. In Nez Perce myth Coyote is the same greedy, vainglorious, lascivious, foolish trickster that he is elsewhere in the Plateau area. No one to whom I talked while doing anthropological field work in the tribe would admit that Coyote had any worthwhile personality traits. He was not wanted as a guardian spirit; yet in total number of appearances he was by far the most popular figure in their mythology. Often he was brought into tales for no other reason, I suspect, than comic relief; one might say that in tales in which he was not the principal character he was a stylistic embellishment. For Coyote is fundamentally a humorous character. He is the epitome of the trickster. In practically every story in which he appears he is tricking or being tricked. However, in either case the Nez Perce saw him as funny. In our analysis we are relating Coyote to the psychological phenomena we have been discussing. He is usually a personification of the id forces, sometimes in their most elemental forms, and release from unconscious identification with him comes through humor. On the other hand, he can also be a representative of the super-ego. (3) An important factor is that identification with him rarely proceeds beyond the unconscious.

The first story which we shall examine is the Nez Perce form of the *vagina dentata* myth. (4) Coyote is going up the river and sees a beautiful girl (Mussel or Butterfly) who invites him to come and copulate with her. He does so but she castrates him and kills him. She then

throws his body in the river. He is revived by magpie pecking at his eye-fat and, after being advised by his excrement helpers, he returns up the river and kills the girl.

It is not necessary that we determine here what prohibited love object is symbolized by the maiden, although analysis of dreams in our own culture which resemble the *vagina dentata* myth motif suggest that the desired but dangerous woman symbolizes the mother. What is more important for our problem is that Coyote's libidinal behavior, with which the unconscious of the listener is identified, does not go unpunished but instead brings a result which constitutes the basic threat that the super-ego wields over the ego. It is only through symbol and humor, through the fact that it is Coyote involved and not a protagonist with which we can more deeply identify, that the story is made funny rather than extremely painful. The ego is protected and prevented from conscious identification by humor. In the end, of course, Coyote kills the maiden, and here too we find a release of tension, this time of an aggressive nature and the product, too, of unconscious fears generated by the castration. The id pressures released are united with an element of the super-ego since the killing of the dangerous being makes the world safe for men who are yet to come.

The second story has a form somewhat like the first, with, however, an additional interesting variation. (5) Coyote is going up the river and encounters Hawawawa, a flying vulva. She settles upon his snout and smothers him to death. Once again he is thrown in the river and after he has floated down a short distance he drifts in to the shore. Magpie then revives him by pecking at his eyefat and Coyote seeks the advice of his excrement helpers about the best way to dispose of the dangerous being. They tell him he should drive a syringa stick through her when she approaches him and after that he should roast her over a fire. Coyote follows their advice but while she is cooking over the fire he grows hungry and slices off a piece of her

to eat. The meat tastes so good that he continues until he has eaten all of her. When he finishes he finds he is very thirsty. He goes on up the river until he sees a fresh spring and stoops over and begins to drink. When he does this he notices some white things drifting down through the water. He looks up to see if snow is falling. It is not snowing. He looks down again and discovers they are teeth; his teeth have all fallen out. He continues on up the river to other adventures but they need not concern us.

Here as in the previous tale the dangerous being is probably the prohibited mother figure in symbolic disguise. The nature of the monster is such that it appears that Coyote's death is once again a symbolic castration. The more interesting part of the story, however, is that in which Coyote eats Hawawawa and loses his teeth. The eating is funny because it demonstrates Coyote's usual gluttony. In addition, it undoubtedly gained humor because of the mouth-genital contact (cf. another Nez Perce tale in which Coyote eats his own anus). But it seems probable too that tensions are expressed here which are more obviously libidinal in nature — that the eating symbolizes sexual intercourse, as Freud has pointed out that eating often does in dreams. This interpretation seems even more likely when we look at what happens to Coyote as a result of his meal: his teeth fall out — a fate which, if we can judge from dreams analyzed in Western culture, symbolizes castration. (6) Here once again the humor is closely related to the re-assertion of the control of the super-ego on both an overt and a symbolic level.

The third story differs considerably from the first two. (7) Old Man Moon has a son who kills all the men that he meets and then takes their testicles home and gives them to his father who eats them. Coyote by trickery kills the son, disguises himself as the slain dangerous being, and takes the testicles of Moon's offspring to Moon's house for the father's meal. Moon fails to recognize Coyote and eats the testicles of his son, remarking however that "They are

too bitter, too bitter." The two go to bed and when Moon has fallen to sleep Coyote tries to steal some decorations hanging within Moon's lodge which he particularly covets. After he has taken them he runs and runs until he grows too tired to go further and lies down and sleeps. In the morning, however, he discovers that with all his running he has managed to run only as far as the door of Moon's lodge. This happens for four nights. On the fifth night Coyote decides he cannot escape and kills Old Man Moon by cutting off his head. This is done with five stone knives. Four break but the fifth accomplishes Coyote's purpose.

There can be little doubt here that Moon plays the role of a father figure and that we are dealing with a symbolized portrayal of the Oedipal father-son conflict. Not only does Moon eat the testicles of men generally but he finally specifically eats those of his own son. The effort of Coyote to escape with the hangings (or symbolized testicles) of the Moon himself is a retaliatory wish to castrate the father, but this is too fear-provoking: Coyote cannot accomplish it. The episode of Coyote's endeavor to escape by running is paralleled in our own culture by countless dreams of the individual who exerts every effort to escape by flight only to find that he can hardly move and like Alice in Lewis Carroll's story, he runs and runs and stays in the same place. In the end Coyote has to resort to a more direct, but, on the other hand, a more deeply disguised technique for overcoming the father-image. He cuts off his head — not, however, without a great deal of difficulty in which his own weapons of attack are broken.

In this tale the primary fear that the id encounters, that of castration, is overcome because the castrating enemies of man are destroyed by Coyote. At the same time a discharge of fundamental id hostility is accomplished in the murder of the father by the disguised son; yet the socializing forces of the super-ego are left in the ascendancy; another dangerous being is eliminated. This time, however, humor plays a smaller part in the totality of the

tale than it did in the other two. Coyote, however, must be seen as a humorous character who, even though the tale were a straight narration of horror, would make it funny to a certain degree. He carries his humor, a memory from other stories in the minds of the audience, with him. He succeeds by trickery; he is Coyote; he is unpredictable. In other words, his ways are not those of society at large, those which the culture dictates. And while these can bring destruction on his head, and humor to the audience when his behavior too obviously challenges the power of the super-ego; yet he can serve a double function, as in this tale, when he denies the power and alleviates the tensions generated by the super-ego by destroying the castrating father-image, releasing aggressive hostilities felt toward the father-figure, and yet operates as the emissary of the super-ego, destroying dangerous beings and making the world safe for man.

We have come now to the point where we must look at all three of the tales and find the common elements within them. Castration is a central theme in all three. This, at least in such an overt form, is obviously no necessary element of the comic, but its appearance in these stories shows without question that castration fears were present among the Nez Perce. The myths demonstrate two ways in which such fears could be alleviated, both involving comic elements. First, the humorous character Coyote as the butt of the joke, the recipient of the trick, becomes the scapegoat on which the super-ego can loose its retaliation for the hidden desires of the id. Second, the humorous character Coyote as the perpetrator of the joke, the trickster, provides release for the hostile elements of the id by doing that which we do not dare to do, slaying the parental castrating figure; and this act simultaneously affirms the control of the super-ego, since the castrating figure is a dangerous being, the enemy of mankind. In the two stories in which castration is overt, the castrator is killed and the death of the dangerous being ends the story or the episode—

the super-ego is ultimately served by the death of the most anti-social force in the story (a kind of turning of the super-ego's powers back against itself), although Coyote in each tale pays certain penalties himself for his libidinal or aggressive anti-social behavior. In the second story the castration is symbolic and Coyote's punishment for his symbolic libidinal act follows the death of the dangerous being rather than preceding it. In each story in spite of the Nez Perce's avowed dislike of Coyote's character, Coyote is obviously the individual within the story with whom identification takes place. And here we see the peculiar quality of humor which makes it such an excellent device for relieving the deep tensions of which we are speaking. It allows, even requires, unconscious identification, yet the emotional investment which the audience makes in the protagonist is not so great that pain results when a separation from that identification is necessary. The ego because it never gave up its supremacy through conscious identification has no difficulty in re-asserting its control, and the super-ego is served by the punishment of Coyote and the death of the dangerous enemies of man.

Thus we have returned to aesthetic distance. For humor enforces aesthetic distance. If one is going to appreciate the joke, he accepts it as such and unconsciously refuses to get too involved in it. Nor does this require the effort that it does in tragedy, since in the humorous tale the butt of the joke carries in him the anti-social or id qualities which we all share but with which conscious empathy, the most social of characteristics, is most difficult to achieve. On the other hand, in tragedy the audience must feel a much deeper empathy for the protagonist, and yet maintain aesthetic distance so that the re-affirmation of the control of the ego and super-ego is not too painful a shock. Tragedy, therefore, requires a great deal of sophistication, maturity, and emotional control (or, in other words, ego stability) on the part of both the audience and the author. This should not be understood as a criticism

of the Nez Perce because they had no great tragic literature. Tragedy is not really a popular art form in contemporary America, either; but humor retains a general appeal.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, 1952; Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris and Rudolph M. Lowenstein, "Some Psychoanalytic Comments on 'Culture and Personality'," *Psychoanalysis and Culture*, ed. Wilbur and Muensterberger, 1951; Anton Ehrenzweig, "Unconscious Form-creation in Art," *British Journal Of Medical Psychology*, XXI, 185-214, XXII, 88-109; Harry B. Lee, "The Values of Order and Vitality in Art," *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, II, ed. Roheim, 1950. Of these the first was the most important for my purposes. The last two are more concerned with creativity (as are the numerous works of Dr. Bergler) than with appreciation and audience response.
2. Caution must be used in equating the conflict in a story with similar overt conflicts in the life of an author or in the case of myth, in the lives of people in a culture. It is even possible that, whereas the story presents a hidden conflict, within the culture we find its opposite in the form of a kind of institutionalized reaction formation.
3. To the extent that the trickster is actually a humorous character and not a defender of man, or killer of demons, I believe a certain amount of identification always takes place with him on the id level. On this point I disagree with Esther Goldfrank ("Old Man and the Father Image in Blood (Blackfoot) Society," *Psychoanalysis and Culture*, pp. 132-141) who sees him in Blackfoot myth as a representation of the super-ego.
4. From my own unpublished material gathered in the field in 1948 under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies.
5. From my own material.
6. Sandor Lorand, "On the Meaning of Losing Teeth in Dreams," *The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis*, V, ed, Lorand, 1949.
7. Herbert J. Spinden, "Nex Perce Tales," *Folktales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes*, ed. Boas, 1917.

The first of these is the fact that the majority of the population of the United States is of European descent, and that the majority of the population of the United States is of European descent.

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A Theory on the Psychology of Jazz

by

Norman M. Margolis, M. D.

- I Introduction
- II The History and Musical Development of Jazz
- III Jazz — A Cultural Protest
- IV Jazz and the American Culture
- V The Role of Adolescent Psychology
- VI Psychoanalytic Observations of Jazz Music
- VII Summary

"When you come right down to it, what brought the whole change in American music? What spread the gospel of jazz far and wide across the country, pulling at least one part of our native music free at last from European influences? It was the rebel in us. Our rebel instincts broke music away from what I would call the handcuff and straightjacket discipline of the classical school, so creative artists could get up on the stand and speak out in their own honest self-inspired language again."—Mezz Mezzrow (1).

I

The purpose of this communication is to present several hypotheses concerning the psychology of American jazz.

Although jazz has been on the American cultural scene for well over half a century, it remains little understood and, in fact, is most often rejected by the general American public as being a useless, cheap, and unartistic form of musical expression. In contrast to this opinion, however, many sociologists, cultural anthropologists, musicologists,

and the small group of jazz devotees, feel that jazz represents the only art form truly indigenous to the American culture, and that its lack of acceptance in the country of its origin has more to do with socio-economic and other cultural factors, rather than judgments based wholly on the value of the music itself. Referable to the latter it should be mentioned that American jazz is enthusiastically supported and appreciated as a true art form over the rest of the world; and that many "serious" composers and conductors have frequently voiced their admiration for this type of music and the musicians who create it.

Much has been written about the history of jazz and the men who originated and continue to create its presence (1-8). In most of these books the authors freely discuss the social and cultural aspects of jazz history, but most are not equipped or disposed to come to grips with the question of whether there are any psychological reasons for the admitted lack of acceptance of jazz by the very culture which produced it. In his recent excellent paper, Esman (9) investigates this paradox within a psychoanalytic framework. The present author will draw much from Esman's material in Part IV of this paper, and extend further some of the concepts originally put forth by Esman. Further, it is my belief that through the psychological study of jazz's rejection in its own culture, one can derive some clues as to the psychology of jazz itself as an art form.

Initially, however, it would seem wise to discuss the nature of jazz as a musical form and how it differs from traditional European music and other forms of American music.

II

In beginning this discussion, it might be easier to state what jazz is not. Jazz is not any music that is merely not

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"classical" or "semi-classical;" jazz is not synonymous with American popular music in which the stress is on a definite, rigid melodic line with the lyrics usually referring to various aspects of love; jazz is not the same as other American folk music which is descended, almost without change at times, from the folk music of the European continent and the British Isles.

What, then, is jazz? Any definition must consider the fact that it is most difficult to transmit the true feeling and content of an art form by the use of words (10). For this reason, and because there is much disagreement as to what "real" jazz is even amongst jazz followers themselves, literally hundreds of definitions might be listed. But none would give the reader a valid understanding of the development and nature of jazz, and since such an understanding would be beneficial in evaluating some of the theoretical concepts to be presented, the author has chosen to include a brief summary of the historical development and subsequent changes of jazz.

Jazz is very definitely the product of the American Negro, having its roots in the musical expressions of the nineteenth century Negro slaves — the work songs (10a) and the religious spirituals (10b). Although the influence of English folk music and hymnals respectively can be seen in these musical forms, their character was shaped largely by the Negro's own cultural heritage, with a heavy reliance on African melodies and rhythms (7). How much emphasis should be placed on the African influence has been disputed, and some (8) feel that the Negro work songs and spirituals are equally indebted to the English, Spanish, and French melodies that had been transplanted to this country. Whatever these diverse antecedents may have been, the important fact is that sometime following the Civil War there evolved from the work song and the spiritual a new form — the "Blues" — which was to become the core of jazz even as we know it today.

The Blues form was something new, related to the work

song, the spiritual and their Afro-European ancestors, but like none of these. Basically, the blues form involved a twelve-bar melodic chorus, the melody being originally stated in the first four bars, repeated in the second four bars, and varied in the remaining four bars. The blues melody had its own distinctive tonal quality, due to the addition of the flatted third and seventh notes — the blue notes — to the already existing eight-note scale, so that in effect there was a ten-note scale (8). The Blues melody and its accompanying lyrics were created and improvised by the singer "on the spot," deriving their character from the particular mood of the singer at the time. The harmonic structure of the Blues followed that of most Western folk music, using the tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords of a given key for each succeeding set of four bars respectively. The rhythmic nature of the Blues had those characteristics that made their appearance in the work songs and spirituals. Instead of a steady beat common to most European-derived music, there were various types of syncopations, and a tendency to drag or jump the beat. In summary then, the newness and distinctiveness of the Blues lay in its form, and in the tonal quality of the melody which was improvised over an insistent but varying rhythmic pattern (10e).

The "classic" or original jazz came into being during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when the Negro began to extend the qualities and characteristics of the Blues style to instrumental playing. The choice of the instruments was dictated largely by the fact that in New Orleans, where this transformation took place, brass bands were quite popular and instruments very available. Hence, the earliest form of jazz instrumentation involved grouping of one cornet, one trombone, one clarinet, a banjo, a string bass (or tuba), and drums, the piano being rarely used. A form of playing evolved whereby the first chorus of the melody was collectively improvised by the entire group, followed by improvised solos on each instrument individual-

ly for as many choruses as the musician felt capable of producing, and the last chorus would again be collectively improvised. Whether the melody being played was a Blues improvised at the time, a march, or a popular song of that day, the stress was placed on group and individual improvisation on the theme, using the tonal qualities of the Blues scale, and the freer rhythmic patterns. It is this style which is known as the "classic" New Orleans, Original, or Dixieland style (10d), defined by Stearns as "improvised contrapuntal variations on a theme with interspersed solo variations" (11).

Since the inception of its original form, jazz, as all arts, has been in a constant state of flux. The first significant change in the Dixieland style came about in Chicago during the 1920's, when a group of local white musicians, almost completely dominated by the New Orleans style, implemented certain instrumental and rhythmic changes which came to be the hallmark of the Chicago style (10e). A tenor saxophone was added to the instrumental voicing and the marked syncopation of the rhythm was abandoned for a more steady four/four time (8).

In the late 1920's and early 1930's still more changes occurred as more and more emphasis was placed on the large band, where whole sections of trumpets, trombones, etc., were used. With such numbers of musicians it was obviously most difficult to improvise collectively, so that a good share of what was played was arranged beforehand, but in the jazz idiom, with whole choruses of the arrangement being left open to allow for various improvised instrumental solos. This large band style, where arranged selections were played with the tonal and rhythmic nuances of the antecedent jazz styles, came to be known as "Swing" (10f), a term which described the feeling transmitted when the playing of so many musicians was "rhythmically integrated" (12).

Early in the 1940's the entire jazz scene was revolutionized by the appearance of "bebop" (commonly referred

to as Bop). In Bop there was a reversion to small bands having one of each instrument. Bop's style, which required of the musician great technical skill and musical knowledge, featured an eighth note rhythmic pattern, and an extensive amplification, modification, and experimentation with the traditional chordal progression of the Blues pattern. A further feature was the use "of unusual intervals, of passing notes and passing chords in the construction of Bop lines and their supports, ending with that celebrated identifying note of the medium, the flatted fifth, with which almost every Bop performance comes to a close" (8). These complicated harmonic investigations of the background chords, and the solo work were, as before, improvised. If the Blues progression was not being used, "bopsters" were fond of improvising on those popular songs which had interesting chord changes (10g).

The dominant era of Bop was short-lived. However, it contributed much to the development of the current jazz style known as "Cool Jazz" (10h). In this style of jazz, which began to evolve in the late 1940's, the harmonic and rhythmic complexities of Bop are retained; however, the instrumental work is very subdued and restrained, almost as a reaction to the exuberance and, at times, the violence of Bop.

These have been the major jazz styles. Others have existed but need not be mentioned here.

There is much dispute in jazz circles as to what the "real" jazz is. Purists contend that only the earlier Blues forms and the Dixieland style deserve the title of jazz; others will extend their definition to include the Chicago and, perhaps, the Swing style; modernists, although accepting the historical value of the previous styles, reject Dixie, Chicago, and Swing as being "corny" and anachronistic; only a few have an eclectic opinion. Yet it is likely that all of these forms can be considered jazz since each has derived much from the parent and preceding styles, and each has retained the central qualities of jazz—improvisa-

tion and a definite emphasis on rhythm. With these factors in mind, it would seem that Ulanov's definition of jazz is most suitable when he says "it is a new music of a certain distinct rhythmic and melodic character, one that constantly involves improvisation of a minor sort in adjusting accents and phrases of the tune at hand, of a major sort in creating music extemporaneously, on the spot" (8).

The evolution of various styles of jazz should be no more surprising than the similar changes that have taken place in the development of other arts. What is different about jazz in this regard is the fact that so many style changes have occurred within a half century's time; and that each change has left its residue of adherents who continue to create jazz in that particular style, despite the changes that followed. Because of jazz's youth and the continued existence of these various styles unto this day, an unusual opportunity is presented to study its makeup.

III

Many factors in the history and development of jazz indicate that it is essentially a protest music.

It can hardly be considered an accident that jazz arose only from an oppressed Negro people, living in the southern United States. In considering the question of why other Negro slave groups outside of this country did not bring forth their own unique form of music, Harris (7) feels that the slave groups of the Caribbean and West Indies areas were not as oppressed as the Negro here; that these groups were made more a part of the culture to which they had been transplanted, and so there was not as much need for them to retain their African heritage; and that because of these facts there was not as much need for a protest. However, in this country the oppression and separation were clear, and without the usual outlets, the slave's resultant hostilities found expression in their music. Furthermore, the abolition of slavery only intensified the Negro's dilemma, as the supposed freedom and equality were not fully

granted, so that in effect, the same grounds for resentment and protest continued.

The work song and the spiritual were stamped with the mark of oppression. The work songs had several purposes, some of which have been generally overlooked. Most obviously the work song served the function of setting down the rhythmic pattern to which the group of slaves timed its motions, the emphasis being placed on that beat which coincided with the greatest point of strain in the work. The lyrical accompaniments to these songs either expressed resentment about the task, or the "captain;" or else they were in a lighter vein to help relieve the drudgery. It has never been fully appreciated, however, that very frequently the singing did not arise spontaneously from the group, but rather was forced upon it by the captains who were fearful that the members of a silent working mass might have an opportunity to communicate, connive and grumble amongst themselves. This furthered the slaves' tendency to express their adverse feelings about their lot in these songs. Similarly, the theme of resentment or the hope of overcoming oppression seemed to form the basic elements of the religious spiritual.

The expression of these latent and overt resentments of these people reached its highest development in the evolution of the Blues. Not only was the actual musical form itself a breaking away from, and hence a protest to, the surrounding musical tradition, but the accompanying lyrics always related the difficulties of everyday living, due directly or indirectly to the hostile environment. "There is no doubt that there is in (the Blues) a strong condemnation of the ruling caste which could never be spoken to a white man's face. But though on the surface there is sadness and perhaps even a seeming hopelessness, underneath is a militant protest and also hope, though it is a hope for a better tomorrow" (13).

How did it come about that jazz came into its own in one specific city in the southern United States — New Or-

leans? In seeking the answer to this question, one must examine the sociological climate of this city during the later years of the nineteenth century. At this time, New Orleans was one of the greatest ports of the land, and being situated on the Gulf, it drew much trade and commerce from the tropic and semi-tropic areas. This trade, and the great mingling of many different types of peoples, both natives and visitors, gave the city a distinct cosmopolitan flavor. Its inhabitants were drawn from many diverse groups — French, Spanish, Negro, and "American," so that the whole cultural atmosphere was different from any other place in this country. On the whole the social mores were more relaxed (prostitution had been licensed since 1857), and even the Negro was shown a degree of tolerance. It was a happy city which demanded the accompaniment of music for most of its activities — funerals, weddings, dances, store openings, etc., all had their inevitable brass band. It was in this setting that the Negroes adapted the blues style to instrumental playing, giving rise to the Classic jazz style. However, as yet, there was no acceptance of this music by the whites, and this did not begin to occur until the establishment of Storyville in 1897. This area was authorized by a city ordinance which geographically set aside a large portion of the city dedicated to legalized prostitution, for Negroes and whites. It was then that "tourism descended on prostitution in New Orleans, and jazz came alive" (8).

The cultural importance of Storyville should not be underestimated — promiscuity, intoxication, and violence were its *raison d'être*. Even in New Orleans, where mores and social inhibitions were more relaxed, this public acceptance and recognition of the presence and necessity of sex was unparalleled. Although the proper citizens of the city deplored the situation and were ashamed of the area, it remained, as it soon became evident that Storyville provided an excellent source of income, both from the taxes and licenses on the bordellos, and tourists which it attracted.

Any visitor or native in New Orleans could buy a copy of the "Blue Book" which listed the name, color, and qualifications of every prostitute in the area, in addition to carrying paid advertisements inserted by the larger and more lavish houses and bars. Here was an island of sensuality where one could indulge in the activities usually controlled by one's own Superego, and its extension, the culture; here was a large social element in open defiance and protest against the repressive forces of self and society.

Storyville required its musical accompaniment and the music it chose was jazz, instead of the many other types of music which were available. This choice can be explained in various ways. It is commonly seen that Whites associate Negroes with the sensual activities which they themselves have repressed, so that the Negro and his music would be in keeping with the unleashed instinctual behavior of Storyville. In addition, jazz was a protest music, and it is the author's hypothesis that the cultural protest implicit in Storyville was attracted to the protest music of jazz; that through this a fusion resulted whereby jazz came to symbolize the repressed Id drives.

IV

Jazz began to move out of New Orleans and up the Mississippi in the first decade of the 1900's. However, this exodus was greatly stimulated in 1917, when Storyville was closed by order of the Secretary of the Navy. Although in the intervening years more and more white musicians came in contact with jazz and began to play authentically, there was little general acceptance of jazz, outside of Storyville.

Esman (9) has contributed much to the understanding of jazz's rejection by the American public. He points out that in any consideration of this problem, it is of importance to examine the general cultural climate of the United States. In New Orleans the cultural climate was not in keeping with the general cultural trend of the country. As jazz

progressed out of the specific areas of its birth, it ran into the American culture which places a high value on properness, control and restraint. In other words the general Puritan, Anglo-Saxon tradition, by this time solid in this country, dictated a rigid cultural conscience which required the repression of the objectionable impulses with which jazz had become associated and symbolized. But further, jazz in itself was a protest against this oppressive culture, and its acceptance implied a threat to the cultural conscience — a “return of the repressed.” For these reasons jazz had to be rejected. Musically speaking also, jazz presented a new form, to which most people, steeped in European musical tradition, reacted with amazement, and more particularly anxiety. This anxiety accompanies many advances in art, and is superficially ascribed to the impact of something new, unknown, untried. As far as jazz was concerned (and perhaps in other arts) Esman postulates that this anxiety arose in relation to the fact that the “unknown” was equated with the Id drives which had to be repressed — a fear that these would return and threaten each person’s adjustment and that of the entire culture. In this framework it can be seen that the less rigid, less Puritanical, less bourgeoisie cultures of Europe allow for a better acceptance of jazz.

The validity of Esman’s formulation can be seen in tracing the history and development of jazz following the New Orleans exodus. The first great countrywide boom in jazz came during the First World War. During wartime, there is a general loosening of psychological controls, because the public condoning of violence and aggression, emotions which are usually repressed, brings with it a greater acceptance of the expression of other feelings usually similarly repressed. Also there is need for outlet, for release, so that there is a greater indulgence, or toying with the repressed. And hence the jazz boom — jazz representing as it did these unconscious drives. The period following the World War saw the advent of Prohibition, an inter-

esting sociological phenomenon which had definite psychological implications. Prohibition, almost as a reaction to the relaxation of cultural demands during the War, was an example of the extreme Puritanical conscience and has been referred to as "the greatest experiment in mass repression man has ever known" (9). However, jazz did not die under this continued pressure of the cultural conscience as it was a living force, kept alive by that ever existent group of protesters. Jazz became the music of the speak-easy, as those who rebelled against this repression became devoted to, and nurtured the existence of jazz — the natural protest music, and the symbolization of the Id drives that are ever striving to overcome the force of repression.

Until the middle 1920's there was no essential change in the form of jazz — the Dixieland style prevailed, although the Chicago style had already introduced some minor changes. The major changes in form began to come toward the late twenties and early thirties, when some central aspect of jazz were retained, but the accent switched to large bands and Swing was the result. Two explanations present themselves to help understand this shift psychologically. One is that jazz as a force, as a "return of the repressed," was getting too dangerously strong, so that it fell from favor with all, and new forms had to be created which, while containing the basic elements of jazz, and the basic protest, also diluted them. An opposite explanation is possible and perhaps just as plausible — that the long siege of one style had begun to weaken jazz's effect as a protest force; it became old, not really a protest, so that a new form (Swing) evolved, breaking away from, protesting the now old and limiting style. It is necessary to point out here that those who were instrumental in initiating and supporting the Classic jazz style bitterly opposed any change of style and continued to play in the Dixie and/or Chicago manner. It is likely that these musicians and jazz fans, now older and more settled, were no longer in need of a protest, having made Dixie and what

it represented to them part of their own "culture," part of their own characterological defense, which could admit to nothing new.

With the advent of the Second World War, we again witness the same breaking down of psychological controls, a renewed interest in jazz, Dixieland revivals, and also another drastic breaking away from an old form (this time Swing), and the birth of Bop. The reasons for the development of this new form are most likely similar to those which instigated the shift to Swing. Bop was greeted with much anxiety and again the most violent objections came from the old protesters themselves, now long accustomed and adjusted to Dixie, Chicago, or Swing. The violent change of jazz form seen in Bop, was gradually altered in the period following the end of the war. It is that author's impression that Bop represented too much of a change, too much of a protest, too much of a threat that the repressed would return, so that a new jazz form had to develop — one which was more subdued, more repressive. The Cool phase of jazz resulted, the most recent form of jazz to have developed.

It is of interest and importance to note that with these last two changes in form, there has been an almost indiscernible return to traditionalism, in that the modern jazz musician requires a facile technique plus a rather extensive knowledge of European harmonics. More and more, modern improvisation leads jazzmen into the exploration of the areas of "serious" modern composers and even Bach (10i). The author mentions this retention and increasing return of traditional (cultural, Superego) aspects, as it illustrates one of the eventual major points of this paper, that the psychology of jazz does not involve a complete rebellion or a complete protest; that along with the protest there is a great desire to protect oneself from this as a defense. In other words the psychological stimulus to jazz seems to derive from an ambivalent conflict arising between the forces of the Id and the repressive aspects of the Super-

ego and its extension, the culture.

In summary the author presents, in the material up to this point, the following hypotheses: jazz as the music of the Negro represented a protest against an existing oppressive culture; that it therefore became the music attractive to those social elements in protest; that through its resultant associations in Storyville, jazz came to symbolize the repressed Id drives; that because of this symbolization and its role as a cultural protest, jazz is continually rejected by the mass representation of the Superego — the culture; that each change of jazz style resulted from an attempt to weaken or intensify its symbolization of the Id drives; that the psychology of jazz represents an ambivalent conflict between the forces of the Id and Superego.

V

Esman has mentioned that today the major portion of jazz playing and appreciation rests with three groups: Negroes, intellectuals, and adolescents. The Negro is in a continued state of protest for reasons too well known. Intellectuals are in conflict with their culture — devoted on the one hand to individual artistic expression and intellectual freedom, and at the same time bound to the opposite cultural forces upon which they are unconsciously dependent. This paradoxical situation, which places them on the fringe of society, is most likely a reflection of their own psychological problem of dependence vs. independence. They too are in protest against the cultural demands and are thus attracted to protest groups and the arts.

Although many have noted the adolescent's interest in jazz, the author wishes to investigate this phenomenon extensively, as it is his hypotheses that the psychology of adolescence is central to the understanding of jazz.

The psychology of adolescence has been well understood and need only be summarized here. The adolescent is fighting a great psychological battle involving his own

highly ambivalent feelings about remaining dependent, or becoming independent; about being a child or an adult. On the one hand his own internal drives, his physical growth, and also the society, imply that it is time to grow up and separate oneself from the family; however, even outside the family he is not allowed to express freely those sexual and aggressive drives that are associated with individuality and maturity, as the general cultural conscience exists. On the other hand, in the opposite direction, there is a pull to remain a child, remain dependent, and this pull is fostered by guilt, generated through years of adjustment, that sexual and aggressive feelings are wrong and that their expression will bring loss of love and protecting care; however, the adolescent cannot realistically remain the child. Therefore, the adolescent is in the never-never land, wanting to be self-expressive and an adult on the one hand, but this avenue is blocked; but once blocked in this direction he is not allowed to remain a child. This entire problem introduces confusion, anger, and resentment and accounts for the adolescent's reputation as the outstanding protester of our society.

The overt behavior of the adolescents must be understood in terms of this underlying conflict, and in understanding these opposite pulls present in the psychology, we can see how adolescents can be, at once, such diverse people. Some examples: who can be as loyal and devoted on the one hand, or so unfriendly and shifting as the adolescent; who can be so kind or so cruel; who can be so happy or so sad; who can belong so much or not at all? There is a tendency in adolescents to become concerned about all the insoluble problems of the world and philosophy — a reflection of their wonderment about their own insoluble dilemma. They assert their independence from the previous family ties in every possible way — they dress differently, they talk differently, they act differently and all of these differences have a rather intense fad aspect to them. They feel that no one understands them, because

in fact, they do not belong anywhere — being too old to be children and too young to be adults. But they do achieve a certain degree of dependence in that they group together — into gangs and clubs. But that there is a dependent need, or the gratification of it, remains unconscious.

Adolescents achieve a degree of dependence by allying themselves with groups of other adolescents, or with groups who have a similar source — i.e. protest groups. And so comes the alliance with jazz which peculiarly satisfies the adolescent ambivalent need. One of the major eventual questions will be: does jazz just happen to be around to satisfy this need, or is jazz's very existence today furthered by and created by this adolescent need?

The reasons why jazz is particularly suitable to the adolescent's ambivalent needs can be clearly seen: First is the fact that the jazz group per se is a protest group, and a protest group that is loudly damned and rejected by the general culture. Belonging to it serves the purpose of separating one quite definitely from that binding, restricting past and gives the adolescent a great feeling of separation, of independence — he's doing something, in belonging to this group, that is really damned by parents, society and culture, so this *proves* he is independent.

Secondly there is a pull toward jazz because it has come to symbolize the very instinctual feelings with which the adolescent is grappling — namely the sexual and aggressive feelings. Culturally jazz has a very definite sexual connotation arising from the early fusion of two protest groups that was mentioned earlier. Therefore, it is a "natural" — an understandable attraction. The fact that there may be no actual sexual release, is in keeping with the ambivalence of the adolescent — he wants to express but does not want to express. But jazz as a sexual and aggressive symbol allows a partial, displaced discharge, which, because it is not complete, psychologically does not carry with it the connotation of full independence, which is still being avoided.

Thirdly, there is the fact that jazz does allow, by its loose structure, by its emphasis on improvisation, a true free expression of oneself through its medium of music. And this is a need for the adolescent — a desire to express what he is, what he wants to do, without the binding force of what his own conscience and the cultural conscience dictate. Through this medium he cannot only express the protest (as he is already in a protest group which is not accepted socially or musically), but he can express his own true self, as being already in the protest group, having cut oneself off, one might as well go ahead and express oneself — the feared separation, in a way, has already occurred. This expression is open not only to the players but to the listeners also, as the enjoyment of music is based in a large part on what Hindemith calls "co-creation" of the audience (14). This expression through listening can never be as satisfying as to the player, the creator himself—because he is actually doing. He is demonstrating that he is not the dependent child anymore — he is making something on his own, and further what he is making and showing to the world is himself, so that an illusion of true independence is built up.

Fourthly, jazz provides within itself the possibility of strong dependence on the group. Here is a group tied together on many counts — they are all protesting, they are all trying to deal with some inner problem, they are all striving for some self-expression and realization. The general antagonism to this group draws it closer together — there is a great mutual feeling that "no one understands us," a great mutual feeling of empathy and sympathy, with a resultant attitude which eventually states "we'll stick together" and it becomes somewhat heretical to leave the group or try to be different from it. (This is particularly seen when someone shifts his interest from Dixieland group to a Swing group, etc.) Finally the adolescent becomes as dependent on this group, as he previously was on the family, and the need to be dependent and not grow

up is also realized. This latter fact of course is most violently denied by members of the jazz community. They can point to so many other facts showing that they are independent — belonging to a protest group, partaking of, or toying with, independent activity, openly opposing the society by fringe-of-society activity (ex. gr. use of drugs and alcohol). How can anyone say they are dependent? But the fact is that these surface activities are in answer to, and a reaction to, the deep seated dependent need, which unconsciously is satisfied by the intense group cohesiveness and mutual understanding. And thus, with all of the needs satisfied (even those opposing each other) consciously or unconsciously, there is little stimulus to leave this situation. If one can have all the illusions of being independent, but at the same time remain very dependent, this is a very comfortable state. Here is the trap where the perpetual adolescent gets caught. In this framework, all of his needs are satisfied. He can continue the ambivalent seesaw with the illusion that he is very independent and grown up, but these ambivalent needs are so well satisfied that there is no impetus to grow up — no impetus to reject the child like dependent past and assume his true role as an individual, as himself. Why should he be just independent, when he can be independent (consciously, but as a defense, an illusion) and still have the gratifications of dependency?

Few other groups can so satiate the adolescent needs. There are other protest groups, and other arts, but none as suitable. Referable to the other arts one can say that none is so rejected by society; and also none so clearly symbolizes what the adolescent is dealing with. Further, the other arts dealing with words and visual symbols, with which we are all more or less familiar, are less capable of obscuring from the conscious the unconscious needs — but music expresses something deep, archaic, primitive, and preverbal (14-19). There is one protest group that might be as attractive and that is Communism. It is interesting that during the 1930's Communism attached to itself free

love and jazz in order to make it more attractive to the adolescent protesters. However, neither the free love nor the jazz was an inherent factor in it, so it failed. The fact seems to remain that no art form is as suitable to the adolescent need as the identification with jazz.

This equation of adolescence to the psychology of jazz gains support when one examines the jazz community. It is typically adolescent in many ways. Clothing fads and affectations in personal appearance are the rule, the pattern usually having been set by some particular idolized musician. It is common for the musicians and their followers to wear definite cuts of clothing, shirts that are made in a particular style, "bop" ties, etc.; personal distinction is added at times by the appearance of beards, dark glasses, and even dyed hair. The language of the jazz group similarly is definitely adolescent — values are spoken of in the extremes (ex. gr. if something is good, acceptable, or thrilling it is the "greatest," the "end," or "too much;" if it is not good, it is the "worst," or the "least"); in another manner, certain values are described by an adjective of actual opposite meaning (ex. gr. something that is good is "crazy," or can be said to be "bad;" the actual implied meaning of these is that what is being described is the "greatest"); words are transferred from one framework to another in which they really do not fit (ex. gr. "blow" is a synonym for "play;" although this may seem understandable for wind instruments, one also "blows" piano, drums, guitar, bass, etc.). These mannerisms of speech surpass mere slang, or the types of terms that every trade or profession has for its own private use. All of these factors (20) are stamped with pure adolescent quality and have the purpose of at once splitting the group further from the accepted cultural norm, (enforcing the illusion of independence) but drawing the group itself closer together (providing the dependency). In addition to these hallmarks of adolescence, there is the "on-the-fringe-of-society" behavior like excessive drinking, excessive usage

of drugs, or overt addiction, which also present the illusion of independence.

The fact that jazz now has, and has continually retained, the above qualities indicates that the *ambivalent adolescent psychology is its driving force*. It appears that it happened as a result of sociological and historical forces, that jazz was born when it was, that from the beginning it was a protest music, that it thus naturally attracted the protesters; and because of its early fusion with, and eventual symbolization of, repressed instinctual needs, it initially and continually has attracted the primary protesters of our culture — the adolescent. But its continued appeal lies precisely in the fact that it peculiarly satisfies the adolescent's ambivalent psychology, satisfies it so well, in fact, that for some it becomes a comfortable trap. One cannot conclude that every person interested in jazz or participating in it is the perpetual adolescent, although it would seem that most person's initial interest is stimulated by the adolescent turmoil.

Psychologically the author believes there are two groups who remain interested and creative in jazz. First there is the group consisting of those persons with the adolescent psychology, regardless of age — on the whole the protesters who use the protest to disguise its true psychological source. Secondly there is that group, who, although initially drawn to jazz by the adolescent storm, retain their interest even though they have grown emotionally to maturity, because they are able to derive from jazz an artistic and emotional satisfaction which does stress its creative, individualistic, and self-expressive aspects.

It would seem that the former group — the perpetual adolescents — comprise the larger group by far. They remain perpetual adolescents because of the peculiarities of their own individual development — a development which made them too dependent on their environment and past, and thus they are unwilling and fearful of becoming independent. They then become allied with an art form

and a group which satisfies the need to remain dependent, but gives the illusion of independence. This gratification of both needs is so satisfying that the attempt is made to maintain the status quo — and hence the character of jazz remains continually adolescent (the actual musical form may change, but this is still due to continued protest and need for further alienation from the old, as if to reject again the unconscious pull toward dependence which has become equated with what is old). The creative act itself might come under scrutiny here. No one yet has been able to define psychologically or otherwise just what "talent" is. Of all the millions of protesters only a very few have the talent to express themselves, create something that is part of themselves, and thus assert themselves. Among the perpetual adolescent creators who have this talent, we must conclude that they are able to express themselves (be independent), because unconsciously they are protected. The feeling would be, if all the conscious and unconscious emotions could be expressed, "Yes, I'm expressing and creating, I am on the one hand being independent, but after all there is no need to be guilty or feel threatened by this, because secretly I'm still dependent, I'm still a child. Don't anybody be angry with me, I'm still the baby, and wish to remain so. But in return, allow me this one outlet." When, for some reason, this unconscious dependency feeling becomes weakened, and there is a true possibility of achieving independence, the perpetual adolescent has to reinforce his dependent bonds. Here is where the problem of alcoholism, use of drugs, and real addiction enters.

Psychologically there seems little question that alcoholics and drug addicts are extremely dependent people. The fact that there is such a high incidence of alcoholics, drug users, and/or addicts in the jazz community indicates that many of these dependent people, in addition, have a "disposition to react to the effects of alcohol, morphine, or other drugs in a specific way, namely in such a way that they try to use these effects to satisfy the archaic oral longing

which is sexual longing, a need for security, and a need for the maintenance of self-esteem simultaneously" (21). The physiological action of the drug is always such, too, that it helps to obliterate the painful reality which is failing to satisfy their dependent needs. Here again it is necessary to point out that on the surface this addiction or alcoholism is "independent" action with sort of a bravado quality to it, as it is out and out against what the society approves; but unconsciously the dependent need is satisfied, displaced from the family to the drug. These psychological factors seem of greatest importance in accounting for the phenomenally high existence of these excesses amongst jazz musicians. Every sort of rationalization is used to obscure the real reason: that they are artists, that it is the hard life, etc. Many musicians report that when drunk or under the influence of drugs, they play and create better. Aldrich (22), however, reports that under the influence of drugs, what improves is the musician's "subjective impression of his own musical ability, rather than the ability per se." It would seem that the reason for an actual or subjective improvement would be that under the influence of drugs they are having their dependency need better satisfied, they affirm more solidly to themselves and to others that they are really dependent, and hence can venture into expressing themselves, be "independent" — but secretly they are protected, they remain the child. What eventually happens of course is that through the addiction they become more and more regressive, less and less able to function even with the protection, and finally degenerate into a state of complete dependence, on the drug, and on the society which they originally, on the surface, started out to reject.

In summary about the perpetual adolescent, it might be said that they continue to create and go forward in an independent fashion, just because at the same time they have the necessary protective device of having their dependent needs satisfied. *This complete solution of the problem dictates that the psychology of the group remain as it is so that jazz continues to be an expression of the adoles-*

cent ambivalent psychology. If the gratification of the dependency need begins to fail, there is a resorting to acting out and receiving the dependence, which at the same time furthers the illusion of independence.

There is no reason why the mature jazz musician or enthusiast cannot operate within the framework of jazz, even though its structure and psychology are formed and continually nurtured by an adolescent psychology. A mature person can find sincere gratification for expression, whether he just listens or does the actual creation. He can derive the satisfaction from that aspect of jazz which does offer the opportunity, as do most arts, to express individuality. However, in the maturer person, because there is no longer the infantile dependency need looming largely in the unconscious, there will be no need or tendency to ally oneself to those qualities and aspects of jazz which satisfy that longing.

In this section the author has extended further his original hypothesis that the psychology of jazz seems to involve an ambivalent conflict between Id and Superego factors. Support for this hypothesis would seem to exist if there were a special relationship between jazz and that period of psychological development when such an ambivalent conflict is at its height — adolescence. Several correlations are made between the character of jazz and the psychology of adolescence, which the author feels lead to the conclusion that the psychological fountainhead of jazz is the psychology of adolescence.

VI

In the preceding portions of this paper certain hypotheses have been presented which explain the psychological factors involved in the formation and continuation of a particular type of music — jazz. Completely separate from

the psychological explanation of one particular musical style, however, is the fact that as music, jazz must share certain common psychological bases with all music. Examination of this area may yield further understanding of jazz's unique status and appeal.

The psychoanalysis of music has received relatively little attention in the literature. Most authors feel that music is related to the very earliest narcissistic periods of psychological organization, when the Ego cannot as yet distinctly delineate the boundaries between self and reality (16, 17, 18, 19). Similar views have been expressed by certain musicologists, although in nonpsychological terms (14, 15).

According to the views of Coriat (17) and Pfeifer (18), the rhythm and the nonobjective quality of music are the keys to its understanding. Music's inability to present objects of the external world indicates that it derives from that period of development when knowledge of such an outside world was meager or non-existent; hence the "content of music is pure libido symbolism" (17), and it "lacks objective content because the libidinal aspect of music has not reached the object level of development" (18). Music therefore represents regressive narcissistic libido activities dominated by the pleasure principle, "untrammelled or distracted by associations rooted in reality" (17). The insistent rhythm of music has the effect of compulsively repeating this libido expression and hence leads to an intense narcissistic gratification. Sterba (19), retaining a similar orientation, states that the essence of the musical experience is "pleasure in motion." An individual's motion is an "idealized mastery of the body," bringing not only intense narcissistic kinesthetic pleasure, but also expresses the "pattern for mastery of the objects of the external world." He feels that the "play of musical movement is — a regressive repetition and idealized intensification of bodily pleasure in that earlier period of infancy when the discovery of the limbs is followed by the gradual mastery of the whole

body." He concluded that movement in music produces "not only a regression to early infantile kinesthetic pleasure but also the intense pleasure of experiencing the dissolution of barriers between self and outside world." Hindemith, approaching the problem as a musicologist comes to similar conclusions when he states that "there exists a primordial musical experience of a very primitive nature, and we must assume that it comes into existence in the undeveloped being's mind by perceiving a fact of life that is common both to him and to music, namely motion" (14).

The application of these theories to jazz as music can help us understand its appeal not only to its mature followers, but one can be led into further speculation as to its special attraction for the adolescent.

The two central qualities of jazz are improvisation and rhythm. If music represents narcissistic libido activity, it seems clear that the pleasure derived from this would be more personal and more intense when the production of the music is not restricted to the rigidity, or reality binding factor, of a score. The improvisatory freedom removes the music of jazz still further from reality, producing a greater narcissistic pleasure. However, this already increased pleasure, is further enhanced by jazz's insistent rhythms which continually revive and renew this pleasure, more so than any other type of music, via the repetition compulsion. This quality of motion is of utmost importance to the jazz musician and fan, so much so in fact that no matter how well an individual or group improvises, the music produced is not considered good jazz unless it "swings" (23). "Swinging" refers not so much to the rhythm per se, but more to a feeling that the musician is able to transmit that there is a definite connection between each rhythmic beat so that a constant motion or "rocking" is set up. This factor of motion brings the final intensity of pleasure to jazz (corroborating Sterba's postulates), and culminates in the kinesthetic release in the listener and the musician. The very nature of jazz music then, tremendously intensifies the re-

gressive narcissistic gratification. One of the pleasures of this regression is the experiencing of the "dissolution of barriers between self and outside world" (19), leading to the oceanic feeling, which in jazz can be so great as to manifest itself in the ecstasy, excitement, spontaneity, and kinesthetic release (dancing, foot tapping, rocking, or hand clapping) that can be seen so frequently in jazz audiences.

The libido symbolization and the regressive narcissistic gratification achieved in music further explains why the music of jazz is so attractive to the adolescent. In addition to those unique cultural and social qualities of jazz which satisfy the adolescent's needs, the music itself allows for satisfaction of both aspects of the ambivalent dependency vs. independency, Id vs. Superego conflict, which is the core of the adolescent's problem. The music of jazz allows for the greatest gratification of the Id drives which the adolescent wishes on the one hand to express, but this satisfaction is achieved only symbolically and by a regressive psychological reaction which is motivated by a withdrawal from the painful reality. However, the regressive, dependent withdrawal also achieves an opposite desired effect, in that the regression is to that level which expresses the "pattern for mastery of the objects of the external world."

Considering the psychology of jazz as music brings us to further insights as to its cultural status. It may now be more clearly understood why jazz was chosen as the music of Storyville — as music it not only symbolically represented the Id instinctual processes, but also, because of its nature, it offered more so than other types of music a much more intense gratification of these processes, and therefore was more compatible to the instinctual outburst of Storyville. Hence, jazz's equation with the Id would seem to arise not only from its early associations, but also from the quality of the music itself. Further, one can wonder whether the general rejection of jazz by the American culture is also related in part to the fact that as music, regard-

less of its social connotations, it presents too much of a libidinal gratification, and therefore is too threatening. It should be noted here again that the music of jazz, through the various style changes, while retaining its improvisatory and rhythmic characteristics, is becoming more formalized and more structured, thus reducing its instinctual impact, as would be demanded by the ambivalent psychology from which it stems.

VII

This paper has presented the hypothesis that jazz, as an expression of cultural protest, has continually attracted those social elements in protest, and that the continuation of the protest is the psychological stimulus to its existence. Jazz's power as a protest force was enhanced when, through its early associations, jazz came to symbolize the Id drives that are constantly attempting to overcome the controls of the Superego and its social counterpart, the culture. Because of this symbolization, and because as music it allows an extreme regressive satisfaction of these repressed drives, jazz has been, and continues to be, rejected by the culture. In an attempt to adapt to the rigidity of the Superego and culture, jazz has gone through various changes, each of which retains a protest element, but the general trend is to bring jazz more into conformity with the existing cultural musical tradition as if to decrease its instinctual symbolization and its impact as a protest against the repressive force. Hence the psychological character of jazz seems to be of an ambivalent nature — a constant vacillation between the strength of the Id and the opposing Superego forces.

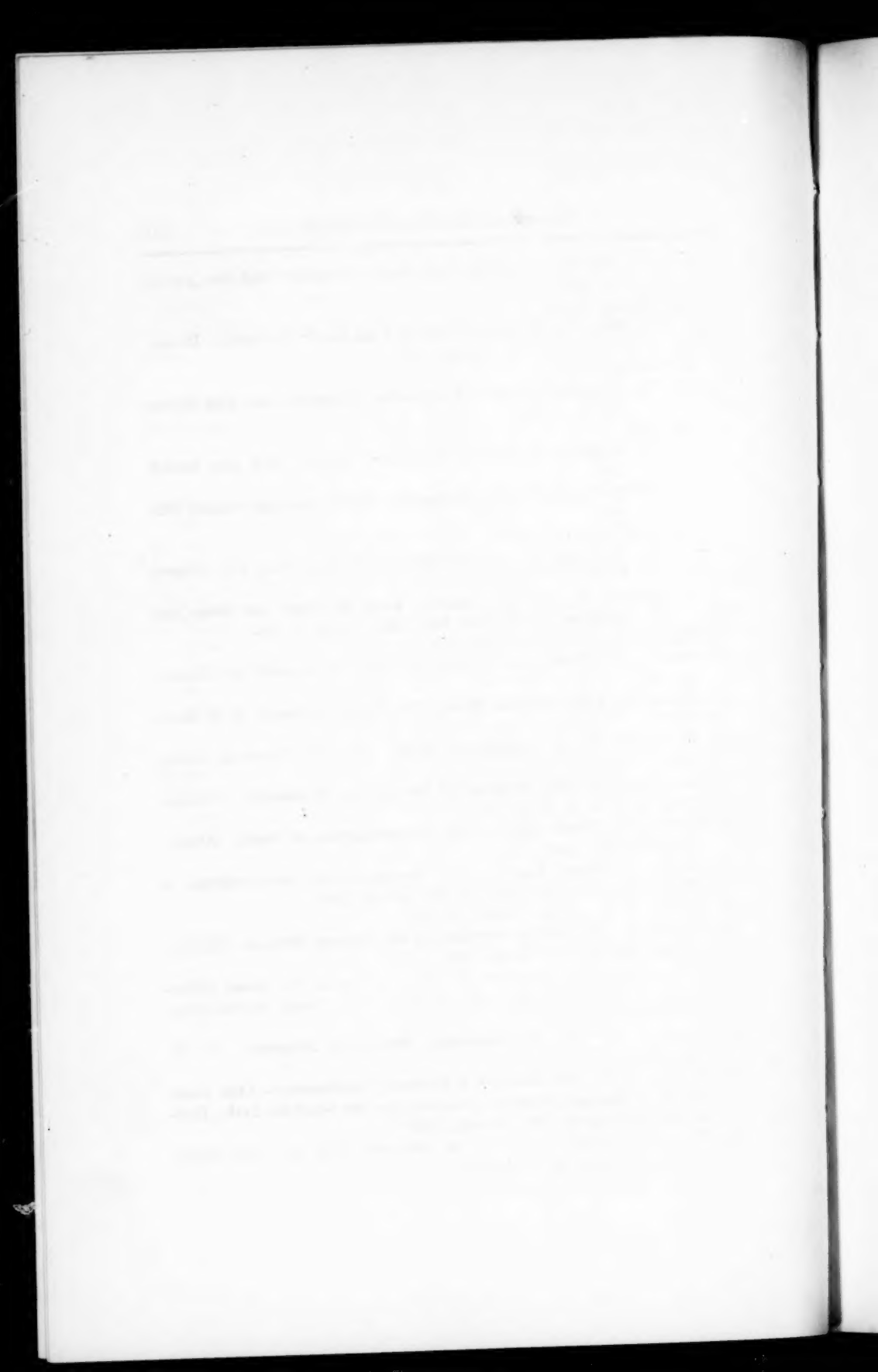
The author feels that it is no coincidence that jazz receives such great support from the major protest group of our culture — the adolescent. This group is involved in the exact instinctual conflict described above, and the nature of jazz as a social force and as music, uniquely symbolizes and satisfies both aspects of the adolescent's ambivalent conflict. In that the character of the jazz community

is typically adolescent and has always remained so, the hypothesis is presented that the ambivalent psychology characteristic of adolescence is the psychological source of jazz.

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1. Mezzrow, M., and Wolfe, B.: **Really the Blues**. Random House, 1946, p. 127.
2. Hobson, W.: **American Jazz Music**. W. W. Norton, 1939.
3. Panassie, H.: **Hot Jazz**. Witmark, 1936.
4. Ramsey, F., Jr., and Smith, C. E.: **Jazzmen**. Harcourt Brace and Co., 1939.
5. Sargeant, W.: **Jazz, Hot and Hybrid**. Arrow Editions, 1938.
6. Smith, C. E., and Ramsey, F., Jr., et al.: **The Jazz Record Book**. Smith and Durrell, 1946 (Sixth Printing).
7. Harris, R.: **Jazz**. Penguin Books Ltd., 1952.
8. Ulanov, B.: **A History of Jazz in America**. Viking Press, 1952.
9. Esman, A. H.: **Jazz — A Study in Cultural Conflict**. American Imago, 8: 219-226, 1951.
10. The author has listed below various recorded examples of the music referred to in the body of the paper. Because of the difficulty in obtaining truly original records of the early roots and forms of jazz, the stress has been placed on those recordings which are as authentic as possible, and yet easily available.
 - a) Worksongs:
 1. Ledbetter, H. (Leadbelly): **Take This Hammer**, in Folkways long play record FP4.
 - b) Spirituals:
 1. Golden Gate Quartet: **Spirituals**: Columbia long play record CL 6102.
 - c) Blues:
 1. Ledbetter, H. (Leadbelly): **Good Morning Blues**, and **Leaving Blues**. op. cit.
 2. Rainey, Ma: **Deep Moaning Blues**, and **Travelling Blues**, in Riverside long play record RLP1003.
 - d) Dixieland:
 1. Oliver, K., and his Creole Jazz Band, in Riverside long play record RLP1005.
 2. Armstrong, L., and his Hot Seven: Columbia long play record ML 54384.

3. Murphy, T., and his Jazz Band: Columbia long play record CL 6257.
- e) Chicago Style:
 1. Freeman, B., and his Summa Cum Laude Orchestra: Brunswick long play record 58037.
- f) Swing:
 1. Goodman, B., and his Orchestra: Columbia long play album SL160.
- g) Bop:
 1. Gillespie, D., and his Orchestra: Allegro long play record 3083.
 2. Parker, C., and his Orchestra: Savoy long play record MG 9000.
- h) Cool Jazz:
 1. Mulligan, G., and his Quartet: Fantasy long play record F 3-6.
- i) Brubeck, D., and his Quartet: **Lady Be Good, and Over the Rainbow**, in Fantasy long play record F 3-8.
11. Stearns, M., quoted by Esman, op. cit.
12. Stearns, M., Hammond, J., and Goodman, B., quoted by Ulanov, op. cit.
13. Moon, B.: **Louis and the Blues**. The Record Changer, p. 9, Sept., 1953.
14. Hindemith, P.: **A Composer's World**. Harvard University Press, 1951.
15. Weinstock, H.: **The Meaning of Music: An Hypothesis**. Perspectives, U. S. A., 3: 43-54, 1953.
16. Racker, H.: **Contribution to the Psychoanalysis of Music**. American Imago, 8: 129-63, 1951.
17. Coriat, I.: **Some Aspects of a Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Music**. Psychoanalytic Review, 32: 408-418, 1945.
18. Pfeifer, S., quoted by Coriat, op. cit.
19. Sterba, R.: **Toward the Problem of the Musical Process**. Psychoanalytic Review, 33: 37-43, 1946.
20. The author uses examples currently in vogue, but these differences of clothing, speech, and behavior, have always characterized the jazz group.
21. Fenichel, O.: **The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neuroses**. W. W. Norton, 1945.
22. Aldrich, C. K.: **The Effect of a Synthetic Marihuana — Like Compound on Musical Talent as Measured by the Seashore Test**. Public Health Reports, 59: 431-433, 1944.
23. The verb "swing" should not be confused with the style Swing; good jazz of any style "swings."



Abraham and Monotheism

by

Dorothy F. Zeligs

It is a rather fascinating task to approach the character study of a biblical figure with the comparatively new tool of psychoanalysis. So much has been written over hundreds of years in the area of biblical commentary that one may well ask if there is anything new to be added. That is the challenge which psychoanalysis offers in this field as in so many others. It often indicates a new perspective and thus leads to a different integration of old material.

An intriguing problem presents itself in regard to Abraham, the first Patriarch of the Hebrews in ancient days, who is popularly known as the founder of ethical monotheism. According to tradition, Abraham took the momentous step of discarding many gods and identifying himself with One God, Who, moreover, had two unique qualities — He was not embodied in material form and He made morality the basis of His relationship with men.

The question to be considered here is whether there was any connection between the personality of Abraham as revealed in biblical and Midrashic* literature and the achievements with which he is credited in the field of religion. Such an approach is commonly followed in efforts to understand the creative products of artists and writers. It seems logical to assume that in the area of religion, too, great personalities

*The Midrash is a collection of biblical commentary from the first to the eleventh century, with emphasis on the story and parable aspects for homiletic purposes.

have been influenced in their insights and beliefs by the character of their psychological drives.

The first question that arises is one of historicity. Are we talking about Abraham as a real person or as a mythical figure? This article will assume that Abraham was a real person and will deal with him not only as he is revealed in the Bible but as part of the world in which he lived. However, even if he were considered a mythical figure, he would still be a psychic reality. Psychoanalysis has taught us to be somewhat more respectful of the opinions and beliefs of the "mass mind" as expressed in tradition and myth, and to seek for the psychological truths that underlie them. It could not be mere chance that associated the particular personality of Abraham and the stories and events gathered around his name with the role he played as the discoverer of God and the founding father of his people.

We will deal with Abraham as a real person, however, because there is some basis for such a belief. During the last few hundred years, there was a prevailing tendency among scholars of modern biblical criticism to regard the Patriarchs of ancient Israel as legendary figures. Within the last few decades, however, these venerable personalities have been restored to a position where their plausibility in history is greatly strengthened. This has come about largely through archeological findings which give a reconstructed picture of the historical and social background of early biblical times. The excavations of the Chaldean city of Ur, for example, where Abraham grew up, as well as numerous tablets and monuments relating to the civilization of that early era make possible a convincing setting that re-animates the biblical stories and makes their authenticity credible. (1) Salo Baron* refers to the "now prevalent assumption of a solid kernel of authentic historic tradition in the biblical narratives" even of this period. (2) Moreover, a factor

*Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. I, page 34, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1952

which tended to be overlooked when the cathexis of interest lay elsewhere is the realistic human quality of these early leaders of Israel in terms of personality and behavior.

Abraham not only believed that he discovered God but felt himself to be the "chosen one," destined to become the father of a great nation, a blessing to all the peoples of the earth. What kind of personality development could have made this rather grandiose concept possible and yet kept it within the limits of reality functioning?

We know that from a psychoanalytic point of view the God concept grows out of the father relationship. This subjective factor, as Freud points out, has nothing to do with either proving or disproving the existence of God. (3)

Abraham's special relationship with God presupposes a certain kind of superego development. It indicates a strong identification with an admired and idealized father-*imago*. What figure might have played this role in Abraham's youth? We know little of his early years from the Bible and can only conjecture from the events of later periods and the world in which he lived, the influences that helped to mold his character.

Tradition makes the relationship between Abraham and his father Terah quite clear. The latter is cast in the role, not only of an idol-worshipper, but of an idol-maker, who tries to get his son to follow in his footsteps. There is thus an important source of conflict between the two. Abraham discovers a "better" God than the gods of his father, thus in a sense denying and overcoming him. The purpose of this tradition is, of course, to emphasize Abraham's new religious concept and to show him as a man who separated himself from his past and became the founder of a new religion and a new people.

However, if we accept Abraham's position in history as real, then such a conflict would indeed have been inevitable and we would assume that at some time in his life Abraham rejected his father as an ego-ideal. Who, then, might have filled this role?

Archeological findings have related the time of Abraham

fairly closely with the reign of the great Semitic king, Hammurabi. The exact date of the latter's rule is not agreed upon by scholars but recent evidence has revised it downward. Albright now places it during the years 1728-1686 B.C., (4) a fact significant for this study inasmuch as another scholar dates the time of Abraham at about 1600 B.C. (5)

Hammurabi was a brilliant and able ruler, one of the truly great men of ancient times. His armies conquered Babylonia and he succeeded in establishing his control over the highly competitive and militant city-states. These latter had previously engaged in frequent warfare among themselves, the governor of each state trying to gain the title of king and make his city the capital. Hammurabi not only united Babylonia politically but also strengthened it through his famous Code of Laws whose influence can clearly be seen in Abraham's concepts of social justice.

In his book, *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud states that the external condition favorable for the development of monotheism in Egypt was the political unity of that great empire under the awe-inspiring rule of the great Pharaoh. (6) This factor would also hold good for the beginnings of monotheism in Babylonia. Freud believed too that there was a general readiness at this period of history for such a development in the field of religion. He points out that society had gone through various stages of progress since the prehistoric era of the primeval crime. It had practiced totemism which, as Reik reminds us, (7) is a form of primitive henotheism. Then it had moved toward the humanized god in his various relationships to the animal totem, and later, under the favorable conditions of a more unified political society, the tendency toward monotheism, the "longing for the father," was again manifesting itself.

This social readiness, however, is no proof that Egypt necessarily was better prepared than Babylonia for such a development. As far as cultural concepts are concerned, these two areas of civilization were not separate and remote

from each other. Archeological findings definitely establish that the lands connecting them, Syria and Canaan, were equally high in cultural development and that "Egyptian as well as Babylonian influence prevailed not only in Palestine but throughout Syria and neighboring countries. (8)

Freud believed that the religion of ethical monotheism arose in Egypt under the influence of the young Pharaoh Ikhnaton, a religious reformer who lived in the fourteenth century, B.C. Freud's chief authority for this point of view was Dr. Breasted, whose book, *Dawn of Conscience*, emphasizes Ikhnaton's worship of "Aton," the mighty and all-pervasive power of the sun. Dr. Solomon Goldman, in his detailed analysis of the above-mentioned volume, points out that Dr. Breasted's efforts to distinguish this form of sun-worship as a symbolic one, reflecting the universal spirit behind it rather than the object itself, has little proof. He declares, "In the opinion of several distinguished Egyptologists, Professor Breasted to the contrary, Ikhnaton's religion was little else than a refined solar religion." (9)

It is worthy of note, however, that even Ikhnaton's trend toward monotheism, which stood out conspicuously amidst the diverse and deeply-rooted polytheism of his day, may have been quite directly influenced by foreign cultural forces emanating from the lands of the northeast. Several hundred years before his reign, Egypt was invaded and conquered by the Hyksos, a people from Syria and nearby Asiatic lands, of mixed race although prevailing Semitic. They became the ruling class and impressed their culture upon the upper strata of Egyptian society. After about a hundred years, (1675-1567), the Hyksos were driven out. (10) But the foreign influence remained, and Ikhnaton's mother and wife were both believed to be of Asiatic origin, as Freud himself points out. (11)

Freud postulated certain other conditions which he regarded as favorable to the development of Jewish monotheism. He theorized that Moses, who led the Hebrews out of slavery, was an Egyptian nobleman imbued with the new

religion of Ikhnaton. Disappointed because Ikhnaton's beliefs had been violently repudiated by the mass of Egyptian people after that ruler's death, Moses adopted the Hebrews as his people, taught them the new religion, and arranged for their escape from Egypt. It was Freud's theory that this leader was killed by the Hebrews during one of their revolts against his rule while they were sojourning in the desert. Decades later, under the leadership of another man, a Midianite priest who worshipped a volcano-god called Yahweh, the Hebrews revived the memory of Moses, endowed the second man with name and greatness of the first leader, and gave to the new god, Yahweh, attributes associated with the religion of the Egyptian hero. The biblical Moses was therefore a composite figure of an Egyptian nobleman and a Midianite priest of a later period.

By re-enacting the original crime, the killing of the primal father, the Hebrews became particularly sensitized to a return of the repressed, according to Freud. The fixation of the Jews to the Father religion, he explains, was because they "acted out" the memory of the awful deed instead of recollecting it.

The immediate basic psychological factor in the development of monotheism, therefore, was the overthrow of a father-imago, then a period of latency during which this deed was repressed, and finally, the emergence of the father-figure on an idealized plane. This is the same process described as the origin of man's earliest religion in *Totem and Tabu*. Freud explains that the Hebrews were able to accept the new religion more readily because of the personal role they played in it as the "chosen people."

Freud's theory that Moses met a violent end in the desert was based on a highly inconclusive interpretation of some passages in the book of *Hosea* by the biblical commentator, Ernest Sellin. This deduction has been described by other authorities as "far-fetched" and "fantastic" and as having no sound basis for acceptance. (12) Freud's own words reveal clearly the tentative nature of his hypothesis regarding

the Egyptian origins of Jewish monotheism when he writes, "To my critical faculties this treatise, proceeding from a study of the man Moses, seems like a dancer balancing on one toe. If I had not been able to find support in the analytic interpretation of the exposure myth and pass thence to Selin's suggestion concerning Moses' end, the whole treatise would have to remain unwritten." (13) The myth to which Freud here refers concerns the rescue of the baby Moses from the Nile. He postulates that the motive in this myth, apart from its being a characteristic legend of the birth of a hero, was to change the Egyptian child into a Jewish one.

We have made this somewhat lengthy but necessary digressions not only to set forth Freud's ideas about conditions favorable to the growth of monotheism, but to indicate the opinion that his application of these principles to the land of Egypt and the leadership of Moses is questionable and that the more traditional viewpoint that Babylonia was the land and Abraham the man deserves reconsideration.

Let us now return to our study of Abraham. We have assumed that he lived several generations after the death of Hammurabi. When this ruler died, a period of decline set in, marked by disunion among the city-states and the establishment of local dynasties. The work of Hammurabi is thus overthrown after his death by rebellion and disaffection among his "sons." Here, then, may be seen a re-enactment of the destruction of the father. Several generations pass, the period of latency necessary for the full effect of the emergence of an important memory in the form of a tradition. Within the recollection of older inhabitants is the heroic period of Hammurabi. This recent historic event of a powerful father-figure who unifies his kingdom and is associated with high standards of social justice, must have been fateful for Abraham's development. We thus see in the life situation of Abraham several elements which Freud postulated for the emergence of monotheism in Egypt.

Of course, the rise and fall of an empire and the memory of its king cannot be compared in degree of affect with the

supposed crime of the "murder of Moses." Still, these events may have provided the fateful stimuli for a development which was already close to the surface of consciousness in the mass mind. Moreover, they have the advantage of being far closer to historical fact.

The monotheistic concept, some believe, was not the discovery of one person, but a *folk idea*, which grew out of the mass psychology of a group. That one individual more gifted than the others should "discover" this conception for himself and teach it to his followers is understandable. We cannot deny here the role of individual genius in being able to utilize available elements for a new synthesis, even though Freud points out that this factor, because it seems inexplicable, should be left until last in the striving for the understanding of causes. But what mutation is to biological change, genius must be to psychological progress. Genius is as much an inherent quality of natural development as other processes of growth.

Having identified himself with a powerful father-imago, Abraham, in his competitive quest for a more effective god than the gods of his father, may have projected his superego on a cosmic scale and "discovered" God. This deeply personal religious experience would involve a close identification with God, a process which may have led Abraham to re-introject a large part of his own ego-ideal. His personality would then be characterized by a large amount of narcissism. This could have found expression in his becoming the "chosen one." Because this development probably took place on the basis of a severe repression of Oedipal strivings, as will be indicated later, it took on ethical qualities. In the position of leadership as head of his tribe, Abraham could give expression in reality to his aim-inhibited drives and thus avoid extreme pathological consequences.

The two chief characteristics of God, His incorporeality and His ethical demands on man can be understood both as the "next step" in religious development and as related to the Oedipal conflict. Freud points out that relegating the

gods to the heavens was an expression of ambivalence, a method of honoring them and of getting rid of them.

The Patriarch was known above all as a *righteous* man. "And the Lord said to Abraham, 'Walk before Me and be thou perfect.' " It seems understandable that the man who attained the idea of an ethical God should consider it his first duty to be righteous, in identification with God. Abraham thus represented the two main characteristics of Judaism, the concept of monotheism and of high ethical conduct.

It is significant to observe the deep need which tradition had to maintain the view of Abraham as a "perfect and righteous man," although it is customary in the Bible to disclose freely the faults of its heroes. There seems to be a greater tendency to repress and rationalize the human weaknesses of Abraham than is usual with other biblical figures. Perhaps that is because the area of conflict and guilt in Abraham is so closely related to developmental factors in Judaism and therefore to repressed areas in its followers.

Freud points out that "ambivalency belongs to the essence of the father-son relationship," and that out of the repressed hostility and consequent guilt of this Father religion grew the emphasis upon ethics in the development of Judaism. (14)

We should therefore expect to see in the life of Abraham a certain amount of conflict in his roles as son and father. It should be interesting to trace the pattern of ambivalence and the efforts to overcome it in the life of the ancient Patriarch.

His relationship with his father Terah must have had elements of strong attachment, for the two left Ur together and Abraham remained with Terah in the town of Haran until the latter's death. But we know that Abraham must have rejected his father as an ego-ideal at some period of his development. It may have come during his adolescence as an expression of what Freud has described as the "family romance," in which young people tend to imagine that they are not really the offspring of their own families but belong

to an upper strata of society. (15) Perhaps at such a time the image of Hammurabi took strong hold upon the gifted mind of the young Abraham and influenced the future course of his life.

The development which led to his discovery of God may have been, in part, an attempted solution to his problem of ambivalence, leading to a splitting of the father-imago. One part became the ideal Father and the other was the weak, rejected father toward whom the son behaved with a solicitude which resembled a reversal of the father-son roles. Abraham teaches Terah the error of his ways in the field of religion but also maintains an attitude of loving care toward him, a combination of duties usually assumed by a father toward his child. We might say that Abraham identified with a father-imago stronger than Terah and thus became "fatherly" himself. This "fatherliness" must have contained elements of competitiveness and hostility. Abraham's devotion to Terah, therefore, would have had a compensatory character because of unconscious guilt feelings.

Rabbinic literature contains many legends about the continual conflict between Abraham and a legendary king called Nimrod, who supposedly ruled Babylonia at the time Abraham lived there. In these stories the idol-worshipping king futilely pits his strength against the power of Abraham's God. The hostility between Abraham and Nimrod may well represent an aspect of the relationship between Abraham and Terah. Evidently Hebrew tradition could not make Terah the chief opponent in the life and death struggle between the forces of polytheism and monotheism. It could not tolerate such a ruthless relationship between father and son, therefore displacing it to a legendary king.

It is *after* the death of Terah that Abraham receives the "call" which commands him to leave his father's house for a new land to which God would direct him. This is the first reference in the Bible to Abraham's great mission, his selection by God as the "chosen one," who was to be a blessing to all the earth. Not until Terah dies does Abraham

dare to receive such a "call," and then only by leaving "his father's house" and going to a new land.

After his arrival in Canaan, a famine occurs there, forcing Abraham to journey down to Egypt for food. Fearful that his life might be endangered because of Sarah, his beautiful wife, who would be more easily available for the harem of Pharaoh if she had no husband, Abraham poses as her brother. His fears are realized and Sarah is taken from him. Through God's intervention, a plague falls upon the house of Pharaoh, he discovers Sarah's true identity, and returns her to her husband.

A similar incident is repeated in almost identical fashion on another occasion when Abraham seeks asylum in the kingdom of Gerar during the period of another famine in Canaan. Again Sarah is taken to the household of the king, a plague breaks out, and the king is warned in a dream not to touch Sarah. The king returns Abraham's wife with a gentle reproof because the true facts had been withheld from him. In addition, he heaps rich gifts upon Abraham and gives him safe conduct from the land.

Commentators have been hard put to explain this ungallant behavior on the part of Abraham, and their rationalizations have been far from convincing. Abraham's own effort at justification was closer to the truth when he said that Sarah was indeed his sister, the daughter of his father but not of his mother. The rabbis hasten to explain that the word *daughter* in the Bible was also used to describe the relationship of *granddaughter*, so that Sarah was more likely Abraham's niece. In saying she was also his sister, Abraham may have been revealing his unconscious attitude toward her as an incestuous object, and while the factual statement served him as an excuse, the feelings of guilt underlying it may have prompted him to renounce the wife who was also a sister.

The incidents both in Egypt and Gerar, with their strangely repetitive quality, and the fact that Abraham anticipated them before they occurred, have a decidedly un-

realistic character. They seem more like a phantasy or a dream. The entrance into Egypt may have symbolized to Abraham an intrusion into the domain of the powerful father-*imago*, the "land" that belonged to Pharaoh. Abraham must have been assailed by unconscious guilt and in a fearful mood pleaded with Sarah to pose as his sister and thus save his life. He was prepared, not only to surrender the wife that unconsciously belonged to the father, but even to deny his own realistic rights, as a kind of *superego* protection, as if to protest to himself that Sarah was not really his wife, but his sister. His tendency to utilize a king as a father-*imago* may have increased his uneasiness and his readiness to submit. This behavior, whether in reality or phantasy, seems much more explicable on the basis of the unconscious factors mentioned than as an expression of physical cowardice. For in other situations Abraham clearly shows himself to be a man of courage.

The happy outcome in both incidents adds to the phantasy quality. Both rulers not only return his wife to him but enrich him with gifts, thus acknowledging that his God is greater than theirs, even as his God was better than Terah's. In this rather ambiguous father-son contest, Abraham comes out victorious. He submits to the earthly father but is saved by the Heavenly One.

It might be pertinent at this point to recall that there is no mention in the Bible of Abraham's mother. Evidently she did not leave Ur with him and her husband Terah, and therefore must have died in that city. That the mother of so important a person should not even be named must indicate a strong repression of the Oedipal conflict.

Abraham's wife, Sarah, on the other hand, plays an important role which is in contrast to the theoretic lowliness of the position of women in that era. This very importance, on an unconscious as well as on a reality level, must have been a factor in arousing guilt and fear within Abraham as soon as they entered Egypt, and later, in the kingdom of Gerar. The severe repression of the Oedipal relationship

may have caused a displacement of cathexis to the wife, also an incestuous object for his unconscious, thus increasing both his fear and his guilt. Abraham's ambivalent feelings in the father-son situation forced him to be submissive to the royal father-imagos.

Many of Abraham's problems and conflicts center around the father-son nucleus. He remains childless for many years in spite of God's repeated promise that a son would be born to carry on the father's mission. The very fact of Abraham's long years of childlessness could have had a psychogenic significance. If Sarah was a mother surrogate, then the sexual relationship with her would be impaired and the emotional reasons for childlessness explained. God's promise to him is of a very grandiose nature. His descendents were to be as numberless as the dust of the earth and as the stars in the heavens. Does not the comparison itself betray ambivalence by bringing together the most lowly substance with the most elevated? Was not the very nature of this promise, in its limitless abundance, an unconscious reversal of the real wish — a phantasy that he might never have a competitor in the form of a son and thus never be displaced? His own ambivalence as a son gave him good reason to fear retaliation from a son of his own.

Abraham declared that his dearest wish was to have a son who would carry on his great task. We cannot doubt that this was true on certain levels. But let us see what Abraham's actual behavior was to the three people who stood in that relationship to him.

The first of these was Lot, the son of his deceased brother Haran. Since Abraham had been childless for many years, Lot seemed the most likely person to become his heir. And indeed he took Lot with him from Ur and they dwelt in Canaan together. But on the first occasion of a conflict, Abraham suggests that Lot should leave him. This story is uniformly interpreted as showing Abraham to be a man of peace because he did not wish any strife between himself and his kinsman. It is also used to indicate Abraham's

generosity since he allowed Lot to have the first choice of territory for his flocks. Another explanation for this action is that Abraham did not wish to arouse the hostility of the Canaanites by taking up so much of the pasturage for both his own herds and those of Lot. Rabbinic sources declare, moreover, that Lot, being an idol-worshipper, was not worthy of filling the role destined for Abraham's son. The fact remains, however, that Abraham, for a rather unimportant reason, sends away the man who stood in a son-relationship to him, even though there was no other to fill that important position. He must have felt threatened unconsciously by the idea of a son who would one day take his place. It might be argued that this separation from Lot indicated rather Abraham's faith in God, Who had promised him a son of his own. But even belief in such a promise would not necessitate his separation from Lot.

In the actual sequence of events as described in the Bible, the promise of a son occurs immediately *after* Lot departs. "And the Lord said unto Abraham, *after that Lot was separated from him*: 'Lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.' "

These words sound like an effort at reassurance. His hostility toward a son is here acted out on a reality level by sending Lot away, while his positive wishes in this direction find expression in the hope of a fulfillment safely put off in the future. In the meantime, he remains the sole important figure both in relation to God and to his people.

Another possible complicating factor in Abraham's feelings for Lot should be noted here. Lot was related to Sarah, not only through her marriage to Abraham, but through actual blood ties. If Abraham identified with Lot as a son-imago, then the memory of his own Oedipal strivings may have been activated, with resulting hostility and fear of Lot's incestuous desires toward Sarah. This would increase Abraham's wish to separate from Lot.

A situation occurs in which Abraham shows the positive aspects of his feelings for Lot and a sense of responsibility for this member of his family. Word reaches him that Lot, among others, has been taken captive during a war upon Sodom and Gemorrah. Abraham at once rallies his men about him and they pursue the enemy. They win a victory and free the prisoners. When the king offers him a reward for this deed and a part of the spoils he had recovered, Abraham refuses to take even so much as a latchstring. To do so would lessen the virtue of his act in the eyes of God. This is clearly a deed prompted by the superego and its reward is the approval of the superego.

The story about Abraham's hospitality, when he entertains angels unawares, is one of the most beloved about the Patriarch. It presents a vivid picture of nomadic, pastoral life in one of its most appealing aspects. Hospitality was akin to the saving of life, for a wandering stranger not only found himself without food and water, but was a likely object of suspicion and hostility. But once he has been welcomed into the encampment and has partaken of food, he is immune to aggression. Hospitality was therefore regarded as a great virtue. It was after Abraham performed his kindly act toward the three strangers that the prophetic promise of a son was again made to him.

Later, on this same occasion, the famous scene takes place in which Abraham bargains with God in an effort to save the wicked cities of Sodom and Gemorrah from destruction. Two of the three visitors move on to Sodom to carry out their mission there. The third, evidently God Himself, tarries a bit. He decides to take Abraham into His confidence about the impending doom hanging over the cities of the Plain and says to him, "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know." Before meting out such dread punishment, God decides to investigate the situation personally. Abraham then lingers before the Lord and dares to argue the matter with Him, saying, "Wilt

Thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" He asks God if He would spare the cities should fifty righteous men be found there. Encouraged by God's assent, Abraham keeps decreasing the number on whom the fate of the cities should depend, ending with the plea, "Shall not the Judge of all the world do justly?"

Psychoanalytically, this dramatic little dialogue might be explained as a projection of what was going on within Abraham, the conflict with his own superego. Lot and his family lived in Sodom, and their fate also was involved, if these cities should be destroyed. Abraham had been instrumental in sending Lot into this city of depravity, where even hospitality was a crime. Abraham himself had just enjoyed the glowing satisfaction of practicing this virtue and had been rewarded with the promise of a son. His feelings of guilt toward Lot may easily have been stirred by this double stimulus, and a wish aroused to save him from the doom that threatened the city. The sequence of events must have some significance — the hospitality, the promise of a son, and immediately after, the discussion of Sodom and its imminent destruction. Might not Abraham's plea for the cities have been in the service of guilt feelings and a defense against hostility and therefore took on such an unusual intensity of righteousness? Abraham pleads for all the people, thereby disguising the identity of the one in the many, a mechanism commonly found in dreams.

The unusual and rather charming anthropomorphic quality of God in this scene conveys the feeling that Abraham is standing before his personified conscience. The doubt which God expressed about what was going on in Sodom may have been the doubt in Abraham's own heart about the justice of his behavior toward Lot.

Commentators have been inclined to eulogize this episode as marking the high point of nobility and righteousness in the character of Abraham. Yet this favored son of God is here more righteous than God Himself, even as he was superior to his earthly father. He may thus not only be com-

pensating for guilt feelings toward Lot, but also expressing some unconscious hostility toward God, the Father. The mechanism of displacement may be involved here. It is not he who wishes to put Lot out of the way, but God, and moreover, without just cause. So Abraham reverses the roles, as he did with Terah, and becomes father toward God, gently reproving Him. Abraham thus removes the cloak of righteousness from God and dons it himself. He overcomes the Father in the very act of becoming like Him.* At the moment when he is altruistically pleading for others, his own narcissism stands clearly revealed. Only on such unconscious defensive motivation can the behavior of Abraham be understood here. For nowhere else is there any indication that his concept of God is less than that of perfect righteousness.

The interpretation that conflict about his nephew is the chief determining element in this scene is strengthened by the fact that during the events that follow in Sodom, Lot is quite openly the central figure. We hear no more about the number of righteous men or the lack of them in the city. Only Lot and his family seem to be involved.

A series of events now take place, the meaning of which is most puzzling. Two of the three angels that had visited Abraham then proceed to Sodom. They meet Lot at the open space near the gates of the city and reluctantly allow themselves to be persuaded by him to take shelter in his home for the night. A mob surrounds Lot's house and demands that he surrender the strangers to them, for the laws of Sodom forbid hospitality. Lot resorts to a rather drastic measure to appease the hostile crowd. He faces the mob and implores the people to take his two virgin daughters instead and do with them what they will, but to spare his guests, to whom he owes the duty of protection. Lot is saved from this dramatic sacrifice when the angels open the door of the house, draw him inside, and at the same time

*See Reik's discussion of the struggle between Moses and God, in *Ritual*, "The Shofar," p. 316

cause blindness among the people outside so that they cannot find the door. The next day, again with the help of the angels, Lot and his two daughters escape the destruction that takes place in the city, but his wife looks behind her and is turned into a pillar of salt.

Biblical commentators say that Lot was saved, not for any virtue of his own, but for the sake of Abraham. And indeed, apart from his relationship to Abraham, Lot has little significance. On what basis, then, did this myth develop and why did the editors of the Bible consider it important enough to be included in the sacred text?

If Lot was saved because of Abraham, then the other events in the story must also have some connection with him. The entire myth might perhaps be understood as a phantasy that developed in identification with the thoughts and feelings of Abraham as he contemplated the possible fate of his nephew in the light of the news he received regarding the impending destruction of the cities of the Plain. It was an answer to the problem of what happened to the cities and to Lot after Abraham's dramatic bargaining with God. There is considerable evidence that the cities of the Plain were actually destroyed by earthquake in biblical times. The fate of Lot therefore was one to tempt the phantasy of men. The ambivalent attitude toward him revealed in the myth might indeed be Abraham's own and may, as we suggested, have developed in unconscious identification with him.

The line of association does indeed proceed directly from Abraham to Lot as two of the angels leave the former and move at once to the latter.

The ambivalence toward Lot in this story is revealed in several instances. Lot is allowed to practice hospitality, the virtue which Abraham himself esteems so highly. But this virtue is offset by the price Lot was willing to pay for it — the degradation of his daughters. We know that even in those days the violation of a virgin was considered a heinous offense. When Jacob's daughter, Dinah, was violated by a prince of Shechem, his act was not forgiven even though he

fell in love with the girl and wanted to marry her, offering rich gifts for her hand. The whole town suffered a cruel punishment at the hands of Dinah's brothers.

In the other instance of ambivalence, Lot is saved from destruction but the hostility is displaced to his wife, a person of whom we know practically nothing and so she can hardly in herself have earned such a punishment. Ernest Jones has explained the unconscious meaning of salt in mythology as a symbol for semen. (16) Thus the pillar of salt into which the unfortunate woman is transformed is a phallic symbol both in form and content. The displaced hostility toward Lot is thus expressed in symbolic masculine form, an immobilized phallus. The punishment may be for "looking" while the city, a mother symbol, is being despoiled. The relationship of this episode with Abraham's own Oedipal conflicts and jealousy toward Lot might be indicated here.

It is interesting to note that while biblical commentators have little that is good to say of Lot, the Bible itself nowhere states that he was an unworthy person, nor do his deeds actually condemn him as such. For the most part, the character of Lot has been built up on inferences through the work of interpreters. It seems likely that they were influenced by unconscious identification with Abraham's own ambivalence and a wish to justify his conduct.

The story of Abraham and his first-born son, Ishmael, shows a continuation of the pattern of ambivalence in Abraham toward an heir. Ishmael is the offspring of Hagar, the Egyptian handmaiden of his wife Sarah. In accordance with the law and custom of those days, Sarah offered Hagar to her husband as a substitute for her own barrenness. In the conflict of jealousy that arose between the two women after Hagar conceived, the latter, we are told, despised her mistress and Sarah complained bitterly to her husband.

Abraham told her to deal with Hagar as seemed suitable to her. This was also according to the law of those days as set forth in the Code of Hammurabi, which stated that a concubine could again be reduced to the status of a servant.

(17) Sarah treated her handmaid so harshly that Hagar fled into the wilderness. There an angel appeared and told her to return to Sarah, comforting her with the prophecy that she would bear a son who would be the father of a multitude of people.

The tension between the two women continued and grew more acute after Sarah herself gave birth to Isaac. On the occasion when Isaac's weaning was celebrated by a feast, the Bible story says that Sarah saw the son of Hagar "making sport" of her. Whether this was a projection or real, Sarah's ready anger utilized this mild incident and she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

We are told that such a thing was "very grievous" in the eyes of Abraham but God Himself urged him to do what Sarah said, for his descendents were indeed to come from Isaac. As for Ishmael, God promised to make a great nation from him also. So Hagar and Ishmael are sent forth into the desert with some bread and a bottle of water. They lose their way in the wilderness and would have perished had not God sent an angel to rescue them, according to the story.

Beneath the manifest content of this episode, other motivations must have been present. Abraham sends his own son and the woman who bore him, into the desert to face a probable death. This is a hostile act, regardless of rationalizations and defenses. The Bible, with its rather unusual protectiveness where the problem of Abraham's righteousness is concerned, absolves him from guilt by putting God on his side. Commentators emphasize that this action was necessary in order to maintain peace in the household, pointing out that Abraham was known as a man who loved peace. But surely Abraham was not such a weakling, nor was he so afraid of Sarah, that he could not have settled this problem without resorting to so drastic a measure. In a large nomadic encampment people can live together without seeing each other for days at a time. Abraham's act can only

be understood as an aggressive one, an attitude manifested on two occasions, when he allowed Hagar, who was already bearing his child, to be mistreated by Sarah, and secondly, when he actually sent her and his son away into the wilderness.

Rabbinic tales try to make amends for this behavior. They tell how Abraham yearned for his son and visited Ishmael in the desert when the latter was a grown man. Abraham does not find Ishmael at home but his wife is in the tent. She does not know Abraham's identity and fails to observe the most common laws of hospitality. Moreover, she is harshly mistreating her children. Abraham leaves a cryptic message with her to convey to Ishmael, advising him to put away the tent-pin which he had there and put another in its stead. Ishmael understood the message and divined what had taken place. He divorced his wife and got another. In this legend, Abraham strives to correct a situation where a home is marred by an undutiful wife and mother. May this not be an effort on the part of commentators to justify Abraham's own conduct toward an "undutiful" woman?

The next important event in the life of Abraham is the dramatic incident when he is called upon by God to sacrifice Isaac, the long-awaited only son of his union with Sarah, the son who was to be his heir, and through whom God's promise to him was to be fulfilled. Here we have a high point of drama and near tragedy, the culmination of Abraham's lifetime of ambivalence toward a son. It is significant that this story occupies a place of special importance in biblical literature and has been an engrossing subject in the Talmud and in the work of commentators throughout the centuries.

Everywhere the courage of Abraham and his unfaltering faith in God is extolled because he showed such readiness to carry out this supreme act of sacrifice. The underlying significance of this event, as an object lesson to the peoples of his time that God did not desire human sacrifice, is brought out. But nowhere, except in psychoanalytic writings, is this

act described in its true unconscious motivation — the expression of an intense conflict within Abraham toward his son and strong feelings of guilt toward God, the Father. This understanding does not lessen the intensity of the struggle, the pain and grief that must have accompanied it, and above all, the final victory of love over hostility.

This "call" from God to sacrifice his beloved son was not only an eruption of hostility toward Isaac, but also, of course, must have involved deep feelings of guilt toward the Father and the need for some form of self-castration as punishment. For, as Reik points out, "the religious sacrifice of a child is always in the nature of an atonement". (18) It seems significant that the covenant of circumcision which God established with Abraham was effected at the time when God promised that He would grant him and Sarah a son. A partial castration was thus the price which God exacted for a son, whose existence would place the father in a position analogous to God Himself. As the time drew near for the son to displace the father, even as Abraham unconsciously had often wished to displace his own father, then hostility and guilt created the crisis which reached its peak in the near-sacrifice of Isaac. For such an act would indeed have been in the service of both feelings, hostility and the need for punishment.

It was significant for the development of Judaism that this sacrifice was averted and that Abraham's realistic ego triumphed over the sadistic superego. Freedom from guilt could not be won through self-castration as an act of submission to the Father, but on a reality level, through the overcoming of ambivalence. Abraham's positive feelings, his genuine love for Isaac, gained the ascendancy. Love overcame guilt and fear, decreasing the amount of his narcissism. Thus one can say with Freud that psychoanalysis shows man to be not only less moral than was formerly thought, but also more moral.

The life of Abraham gives indications of the relationship between man's intrapsychic struggle and the development of

an ethical social system based on religion. Freud has stated that cultural progress grows out of instinctual renunciation. In the greater number of Abraham's conflicts with his ambivalent feelings, the positive elements won over the hostile ones. Thus the tendency grew within him for a closer union, not only with his family and his tribe, but with the whole world, as expressed in the ideal of being the father of a great nation and a blessing to all the earth. Abraham thus typifies in the life of an individual, a process that to a certain extent is similar to the experience of a whole people. (19)

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THE APE: *Simia qua Similis*

by

Arthur B. Brenner

In many languages, to "ape" means to imitate. But apes and monkeys do not merely imitate man. They are, themselves, imitations of mankind: poor imitations, perhaps, or better still, travesties of mankind. It is as if God or Nature had made them almost but not quite human. The legend persists that when Satan, jealous of God's creativeness, attempted a counter-creation, the ape was the nearest he could come to the creation of man. Perhaps, then, monkeys imitate man in the effort to rise above their sub-human condition and attain human stature. But they can never achieve their goal. The best they can accomplish is only a pretense and a sham. The nearest they can come to true love is only "*affenliebe*"; they can do no better than "*payer en monnaie de singe*." This ape-like quality was seen in human beings who made excessive claims to be what they were not: an over-painted old woman was "*simia fucata*"; a grotesquely pretentious person was "*simia in purpura*" or "a monkey dressed in jackdaw's feathers."

For the most part, however, apes take a spiteful revenge by indulging in "monkey-shines" and "monkey business" and in "monkeying around." They take their revenge, too, by flaunting their sub-human, bestial nature and giving free expression to their animal instincts. Uninhibited animal activities which are innocent or only mildly offensive on the part of cats or dogs or cattle or horses become excitingly obscene when engaged in by "almost human" monkeys. Man certainly projects a great deal upon his nearest animal cousins.

Perhaps there is a deeper level to this projective identification. It is not merely that monkeys are "almost human".

They are small and active and gleeful — like children. But in repose their faces are sad and thoughtful and they seem “like little men”. We see in them, then, the uninhibited, instinctual pleasure seeking of our own childhood — together with our intermittent and never wholly-successful efforts to be grown up and act like adults. That may be the reason why “little monkey” and *mono moneto*” are terms of endearment. But when we are amused by their absurd pretensions to humanity, are we merely assuring ourselves of our own superiority to the poor monkeys or are we also more secretly enjoying a laugh at the expense of the grown-ups whom they so ridiculously burlesque, and whose maturity we are never quite sure that we ourselves can achieve.

* * * * *

A vast amount of material for psychoanalytic interpretation is provided in the recently published “Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance” by Dr. H. W. Janson (1). This book lists and illustrates innumerable instances of the depiction of apes and monkeys in the graphic art and the sculpture of the time and explains their symbolism by reference to the literature — classic and contemporary — which was read during the period. It makes no attempt to search below the manifest content of the material but stops short just at the point where psychoanalytic interpretation might take over.

Dr. Janson reports that “as early as c. 600 A.D., and perhaps before, the word *simia* had been explained as a derivative of *similitudo*, probably on the basis of Ennius’ *simia quam similis* * * * a line so well known that it almost had the status of a proverb.” (pp. 19, 20). According to the traditional view, “apes were ‘man’s poor relations’, debased replicas of ourselves, just as men were the ‘poor relations’ of the angels.” (p. 13). The Greeks and Romans “did acknowledge the animal’s quasi-human qualities in looking upon it as morally vile and aesthetically hideous. The ape was *turpissima bestia* to them precisely because it was *quam similis nobis*. As an unworthy pretender to human status,

a grotesque caricature of man, the ape became the prototype of the trickster, the sycophant, the hypocrite, the coward, as well as of extreme ugliness." (p. 14). To the moralists of the Middle Ages, apes symbolized the various sins and shortcomings of mankind.

Out of the wealth of material presented by Dr. Janson, two themes are conspicuous for their long historical development and their richness of content.

THE APE MOTHER AND HER TWIN BABIES

This is the story of "the mother ape who always bears twins, one of whom she loves while loathing the other. * * * The origin of the theme can be traced back to the Aesopic fables of classic Greece, where its purpose was simply to demonstrate the unfortunate effects of excessive affection. The ape mother hugs her favorite child so insistently that she smothers it, while the other, forced to fend for itself, clings to her back and survives. However, in the hands of later classical authors, the story ceased to be a mere fable and assumed the character of an actual zoological observation. * * * Meanwhile Avianus has introduced a new element into the Aesopic tale. According to him, the loved child is not smothered to death but perishes in a different manner; when beset by hunters, the mother ape runs away with the favored young in her arms and with the other clinging to her back, but as she gets tired in the course of the flight she is forced to drop the loved child while the hated one survives." (pp. 31, 32). This story is repeated and is frequently illustrated in the Bestiaries of the twelfth century.

"The moralistic interpretation of the mother ape as the image of the sinner was supplied from a different quarter. It flourished, not unexpectedly, in the collections of *exempla*; that of Jacques de Vitry (c. 1200) provides the most influential version. * * * There is, in fact, reason to believe that the man who first conceived the mother ape story as an allegory of sinful humanity was none other than John Scotus. The interpretation occurs in the Boethius Commentary re-

lated to the great neo-platonist. Here the mother ape represents those who *bona corporis prae se ferunt id est praeferunt*, the seekers after *voluptas* and slaves of the flesh. The favored young, which she drops as the hunters pursue her, stands for the pleasures of the body, while the hated one stands for *bona animae*, the goods of the soul." (pp. 32, 33)

"At this point, a new element enters our story. Like the Boethius commentator, Jacques de Vitry compares the mother ape to 'the reprobates who embrace the pleasures and riches they love', but the hated child now represents the sins which, although unwanted, cling to the sinner's back. And in order to supply a dramatic climax to the story, the author tells us that because of the weight of her sins the ape is eventually caught by the hunters. This last elaboration was an important step, since it shifted the emphasis from the fate of the two young to that of the mother ape. It also assigned a more significant role to the hunters, whom Jacques de Vitry defines as the *venatores infernales*, the forces of Satan who drag the sinner off to Hell. The main theme of the tale is thus no longer 'the unfortunate effects of excessive affection' but 'how and why the mother ape is captured.' " (p. 33).

Here we start with a simple fantasy: it is dangerous if mother loves me too much and holds me too close to her breast. This fantasy would seem to be a defense against the never-to-be-satisfied desire to possess mother's unlimited love and to be held close to her breast. But calling this unachievable desire "dangerous" implies also that it is "wrong". In the oedipal context, love for one's mother is dangerous just because it is sensed as wrong — a defiance of the rights of the father. But even before the development of oedipal guilt, the possibly devouring or castrative mother is seen as a threat and submissive love toward the mother is sensed as dangerous. (2) Therefore it seems prudent to the child to regard mother's love as only "*affenliebe*", a destructive love: she will kill the love-seeking child by smothering it or dropping it. But no matter what defenses may be erected against the desire for mother's love, the de-

sire remains and is never fully satisfied; as a second defense, therefore, there is the identification with the twin who is rejected (and what child does not feel that he is rejected) — the twin who never-the-less clings to the back of the unloving mother and is not destroyed.

The sour grapes theme (it is better— or safer— to be rejected than to be loved) now turns into the Cinderella theme — the theme of sibling rivalry. The fantasizing child solves the hurt of his rejection by asserting that his hated rival, whom mother loves so excessively, she will eventually destroy; that unfairly privileged sibling, moreover, represents the mother's weakness and sinfulness. But however much the fantasizing child feels rejected, he still clings to mother; *he* will be saved; *he* represents the good of her soul.

At the first level, the child dissociated its "good" self from its incestuous self; now it dissociates itself from its rival at the mother's breast. This theme of nursling rivalry is at least hinted at in other pictorial representations. "An ape has abducted a baby; he (or more probably, she) tenderly embraces the nursling, while the alarmed mother examines the empty cradle. Another manuscript shows the simian carrying off the child while a second ape rocks the cradle, in which she has placed her own offspring." (p. 173). It may be noted — without pursuing the digression further — that this amounts to the wish that an ape (bad mother) would run off with the younger sibling who ousted one from one's cradle, in order that, even though in the guise of an ape-baby, mother's erstwhile favorite might resume its original and rightful place in its mother's affections (3).

Returning to the original theme of the ape mother and her two babies, we note that as the later and more moralistic revision of the story emphasizes the sinfulness of the bad mother, it also adds emphasis to the infernal hunters, who are obviously the "bad" (oedipal) father. As the father's role is stressed, the focus of the story becomes the guilt and the punishment of the mother. The incest guilt is hers; let *her* fall into the hands of the justly irate father. At this

stage of the story, the fate of the child seems to escape mention. May we not suppose that the fantasizing child hopes that its projection of incest guilt upon the mother will enable it to escape the father's wrath.

THE PEDLAR AND THE APES

While the story of the ape mother was being developed and elaborated, it was paralleled by another theme, the pedlar and the apes, which Dr. Janson traces back to the marginal miniatures of the mid-fourteenth century, and which was portrayed graphically rather than in literary form: "a pedlar has fallen asleep at the foot of a tree, his pack by his side. A number of apes — sometimes as many as twenty, rarely less than a dozen — are disporting themselves in the tree and on the ground; they have opened the pack and are busily examining and trying on its contents — which consist, generally speakin, of exactly the kind of *vanae merces* calculated to give apes pleasure, such as boots, gloves, caps, belts, small musical instruments, mirrors, etc. Usually a few of the simians are busy 'unpacking' the pedlar, too; they pull off his boots, unbutton his trousers, examine his head for vermin" (p. 217). "It is interesting to note that the simians in our miniatures display a strong predilection for things to be worn, such as boots, gloves, caps, belts with purses, etc; most of them are dressed up in one or more of these articles, and two are holding mirrors in order to admire their new-won beauty. * * * Does this not suggest that our subject developed, in part at least, from the old story of the treacherous boots?" (p. 218).

The story of the boots is indeed a very old one, based upon the ape's compulsive imitation of what he sees humans do. "One version, related by Aelian and other classical authors, has the hunter putting on a pair of boots weighted with lead as the ape watches from a distance; he then withdraws, leaving the treacherous boots behind. The ape, imitating the hunter's action, puts on the boots and, unable to run away, is easily captured." (p. 33). "An anonymous

Florentine Dante Commentary of the fourteenth century informs us that apes are captured in the following manner: the hunter goes into the woods where the simians are; when he has sighted his prey, he pulls 'mirrors and other things' out of his bag. Then he dons and laces a pair of boots, takes them off again, and withdraws. An ape will come and put on the boots in the same way; as soon as he has laced them, so that he cannot run away fast enough, the hunter pounces on him." (p. 218).

The sleeping pedlar calls for attention. "Perhaps, at the beginning of his career, he was in reality a hunter of apes, equipped with boots, mirrors and other attractive items to be used for bait, who fell asleep while waiting for the simians to show an interest in his wares." (p. 219). In later versions, the hunter-pedlar's slothful sleep is aggravated into a drunken stupor. "With this new feature our theme has lost every trace of drama or surprise; now there is no danger any more that the pedlar will suddenly awake and catch the simians at their nefarious game. * * In contrast with the British Museum miniatures, they all show several apes investigating the pedlar himself, not only his wares. One of them is going through his pockets, another is searching his head for lice and a third has unfastened the sleeper's hose and is about to pull away the breech-cloth. The latter operation in particular demands a thoroughly anaesthetised victim. Moreover, this bit of coarse humour brings to mind the drunkenness of Noah, with the inquisitive ape in the role of the patriarch's second son, a pictorial joke certain to be appreciated by a late mediaeval audience. It also explains why our subject could be linked with the Fountain of Youth in Valenciennes Castle * * * ; both scenes had to do with sex and thus provided amusement of a somewhat risqué variety." (p. 220).

The shift of emphasis from the wiliness of the hunter to the debasement of the pedlar who is besotted by sleep or wine was subsequently again revised. "The pedlar was no longer laughed at but looked upon with sympathy and pity

as the victim of irresponsible pranksters. * * * Weiditz has carefully avoided the various indecent acts we have encountered previously, since the pedlar here is no longer an object of ridicule; his apes concentrate on the task of carrying the contents of the pack up into the trees, so that the pedlar will find it almost impossible to retrieve his property. There is a heavy emphasis on mirrors, emphasizing the 'vain' quality of the simians. A quarter of a century later we encounter the same point of view in a poem by Hans Sachs. The work is of particular interest since it appears to be the only extended treatment of our theme in literature. Sachs's own source, or sources, must have been visual, not literary; his detailed description of the event tallies almost word for word with the pictorial examples, such as the Gotha woodcut." (p. 222). The pedlar is not a drunkard, but a hard-working, poor, old man, who falls asleep while resting near a well. "As we might expect, he awakes while the apes are still engaged in their mischievous tasks, but they run away so quickly that he cannot vent his anger on them, and when he starts to gather his scattered belongings he finds that most of them are high up in the trees, beyond his reach." (p. 222). "Sachs's kindly treatment of the pedlar has a curious analogy in a picture of about the same date, in the Dresden Gallery. * * * Our picture also shows another detail emphasised in the poem; almost all the pedlar's goods are hung in the branches of very tall trees, so that they cannot possibly be recovered." (p. 223).

Here, again, we have universal and exceedingly primitive material. The ape who watches the hunter putting his foot into the boot and withdrawing it, is obviously spying upon the primal scene. And when he attempts to imitate the hunter's action, he is trapped by the fatal boot (the castrative mother) and is captured by the hunter (the oedipal father).

In the later version, the tables are turned; the fearsome hunter becomes the besotted pedlar, the butt and the victim. Correspondingly, the interest with which the ape spied upon

the primal scene becomes the voyeurism-exhibitionism of the mirrors and the obscene curiosity with which he explores the pedlar's body. In the ape's conduct with the pedlar's person, Dr. Janson notes the element of sexuality, and sees a reference to the ninth chapter of Genesis in which Ham uncovered the nakedness of Noah. This biblical reference might be carried one step farther. In the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, incestuous matings are forbidden in terms of "uncovering the nakedness" of the tabooed woman; but her nakedness is also referred to as the nakedness of her lawful spouse. "The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover, it is thy father's nakedness. * * * Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife; she is thine aunt. * * Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife; it is thy brother's nakedness." Thus Leviticus links the removal of the pedlar's breech cloth with the ransacking of his pack; his nakedness is uncovered, personally and physically, and also by the pillaging of his pack, which is the raping of his spouse. It is no accident or mere coincidence that "the simians in our miniatures display a strong predilection for things to be worn, such as boots, gloves, caps, belts with purses, etc." — all of which, again, are female genital symbols. Even the mirrors — whatever else they may represent — are characteristically women's paraphernalia. And the ascent of the apes into the tree-tops with their loot is an additional symbol of intercourse. In short, we have here a gleeful, ribald and almost explicit re-enactment of the primal horde crime — the father unconscious (as if slain) and the many sons taking possession of his harem.

An additional level of significance attaches to the apes' ravaging of the pedlar's pack. They not only satisfy their curiosity about mother's body; they not only break into it and violate it; they also make off with its contents. The fantasy, therefore, extends beyond intercourse with the mother and includes the destruction of potential sibling rivals. Here we are reminded of the stories which have already been men-

tioned of apes stealing babies out of their cradles. But "baby" also is "penis". When the apes run off with the contents of the pack, they are defeating the threat of the castrative mother by robbing her of her penis; she is reduced to the same state of ridiculous helplessness which is represented by the pedlar's drunken stupor. But in the fully developed form of the fantasy of the castrative mother-with-a-penis, the mother's castrating penis is derived from the father's; so, again, the apes are defeating both parents.

In these gleeful fantasies, the apes "get away with" their wickedly mischievous monkey-shines, but the fantasies are so outspoken as to revive a sense of guilt and therefore of danger. Surely anyone who indulges such evil thoughts, such patently oedipal desires, must fear the well-deserved punishment of castration. Therefore a reassuring element is casually introduced into the fantasy. The boots, gloves, caps and purses which the apes carry off into the trees are undoubtedly female symbols — in that they are hollow objects into which one inserts one's "foot", "hand" or "head" — i.e. penis. But in so far as they also stand for the penis, it is the indestructible penis — the penis which may be removed, but which can be recovered and put on again. Not only, then, are the apes gleefully reenacting the original crime of the primal horde; they are doubly reassuring themselves (over and above the pedlar's helpless drunkenness) against the talionic castration which ought to be the inevitable punishment of their wicked actions.

It is interesting that all this could be presented freely and whole-heartedly only in pictures; when it was put into words, Hans Sachs had to express a kindly sympathy for the poor old hard-working pedlar who was so cruelly victimized by the wicked apes.

The two themes which have here been treated leave untouched a great deal of Dr. Janson's material, but the involvement of apes in these major concerns of the unconscious affords a probable basis for the general identification of apes with all that is evil in human kind. They are so very like

us that we can the more easily project our evil impulses upon them — and thus we make them even more like ourselves. That may have been the implication of the late Lew Lehr's famous dictum: "Monkeys is the cwaziest people!"

- (1) Janson, H. W.: Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 20; The Warburg Institute, University of London, London, 1952.
- (2) Brenner, Arthur B.: The Great Mother Goddess, *Psychoanalytic Review*, October 1950, Vol. 37, No. 4, p. 320.
- (3) Brenner, Arthur B.: The Fantasies of W. S. Gilbert, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, July, 1952, Vol. XXI, No. 3, p. 373.

Hanns Sachs's Conscience.

by

Nandor Fodor

An editor publishes that which he likes, and refuses that which he dislikes. This is, of course, an over-simplification. There is such a thing as editorial policy, opinion of publishers, advisory editors, pressure of readers, ideology of the times, literary fashion, etc. etc. There is also the unconscious counter-current: dislike against conscious liking, like against conscious resistance which may lead to a host of actions that belong to Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Editors are just as human as their contributors, and editorial prejudice, resistance or preference is also an individual problem liable to psychoanalytic interpretation. If we rarely hear of such problems, it is because the editors like to be written to and not written about. Advisedly, they try to keep their own personality in the background as the cause the publication serves is *the* thing. If it were not so, the publication would not be worth the printer's ink, and the public would soon let them know.

The first time that editorial prejudice as a psychoanalytic problem was brought to my attention was through a letter from Sir Oliver Lodge. It concerned an article entitled *Telepathy — A Survey* written by Prof. Sumner Boyer Ely, of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in *The Scientific Monthly* (the official organ of The American Association for the Advancement of Science) in February 1940. In a symposium of answers published in the May 1940 *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, I took issue with Prof. Ely's negative attitude.

Apparently I missed a point of considerable psychological

importance. Part of Prof. Ely's arguments was based on statistical figures: 1 out of 1900. The figure should have been: 1 out of 19000 which, of course, makes an awful lot of difference in statistical improbability. I assumed that the figure 1900 was due to printer's error. Sir Oliver Lodge, in a personal letter dated June 20th, 1940, commented as follows:

"I think you let him off too lightly by assuming that his 1- 1900 instead of 1- 19000 is a printer's error. He ought to be particularly careful of printer's errors, especially when dealing with figures in which the error strengthens his own case."

I do not know whether The Scientific Monthly sends galley proofs to its contributors. In view of the care which all scientists take with their papers, it was presumably done in which case Prof. Ely's failure to notice and correct the error is an example of an unconscious desire to strengthen his case by the printer's error. But let us assume that the author of the paper was innocent because he had been sent no galley proofs and the editor was responsible for the error. (Scientific papers usually have no money for proof readers and the reading is done by the editor himself) In that case the error may reveal the editor's bias, which may or may not have been supported by a telepathic contagion from the contributor. He would not respond to a telepathic pressure unless he himself was resistant to the acceptance of telepathy. To quote from my *Telepathic Dreams*:

"The telepathic dream . . . reflects like a mirror the contents of the unconscious of the agent, paralleling it by similar contents in the recipient's mind which are shaped into a personal dream."

In a sense, every unconscious activity is a dream. Hence, if my argument is correct, the editor could only fall victim to a telepathic contagion by the contributor, if she shared the contributor's belief, in this case his scepticism regarding telepathy.

Similarly, an unconscious sympathy on the part of the

editor with the ideas of the contributor will overrule conscious criticism and objections and may produce mistakes in favor of the contributor. To this I attribute the few instances in which, in medical publications, I was given the title of an M.D., an unconscious wish, perhaps, on the part of the editor to support my argument. Of course, the editor will rationalize his unconscious sympathy by calling it fairness or respect of original thinking. I owe the publication of *The Search for the Beloved* (the original summary of the later book) to this. The late Dr. Hutchings, then editor of *The Psychiatric Quarterly*, was impressed by the originality of my paper. One of his editorial advisers, however, contemptuously referred to the paper in a four letter word which begins with "s". Dr. Hutchings' answer, confided to me at a much later date, was: "yes, but it is good s . . . , we shall publish it."

Unconscious editorial resistance is not as apparent. My best example concerns *The American Imago*. It is excellently documented by the written confession of Hanns Sachs, its former editor. It concerns my paper *Telepathic Dreams* which was published in *The American Imago* in Aug. 1942. I submitted it early in November 1941, and Hanns Sachs' first reaction was as follows:

"The subject, as you certainly know best, is a very delicate one, exposed at one side to a great deal of pseudo-scientific scepticism, at the other end to the longing for the belief in the supernatural — both extremes probably springing from the same narcissistic urge.

I find the material of your article highly interesting and the representation, on the whole, so well balanced that both extremes are kept well in hand. I feel critical concerning the last case where the fact of the homosexual fixation — transference and counter-transference — seems to be sufficient for the explanation without the use of telepathy. In other places the telepathic interpretation seems quite acceptable, but due to the fact that the analytic material — the free association — is only fragmentary, some legitimate doubts

remain. This applies specially to those parts where a wide use is made of the symbolic interpretation. I venture therefore to submit two proposals to you: First, I want to publish together with the article an editorial comment in the same manner as with the article on the "Signs of the Zodiac". This comment will, of course, be submitted to you before it gets printed. Secondly, I should advise that you subject your article to a final revision, especially in regard to the last case.

I was anxious to comply because Telepathic Dreams was my first attempt to break into psycho-analytic literature, and such an attempt on the part of a non-medical writer is always fraught with considerable difficulties. Nevertheless I voiced the fear that once we admit a telepathic contact, the independence of the patient's associations might be affected, hence it is uncertain to what an extent further associations will decide the argument. I heartily welcomed the idea of his editorial comment as Hanns Sachs' attitude seemed to be exceedingly fair. Yet, there was more to it than I or he knew.

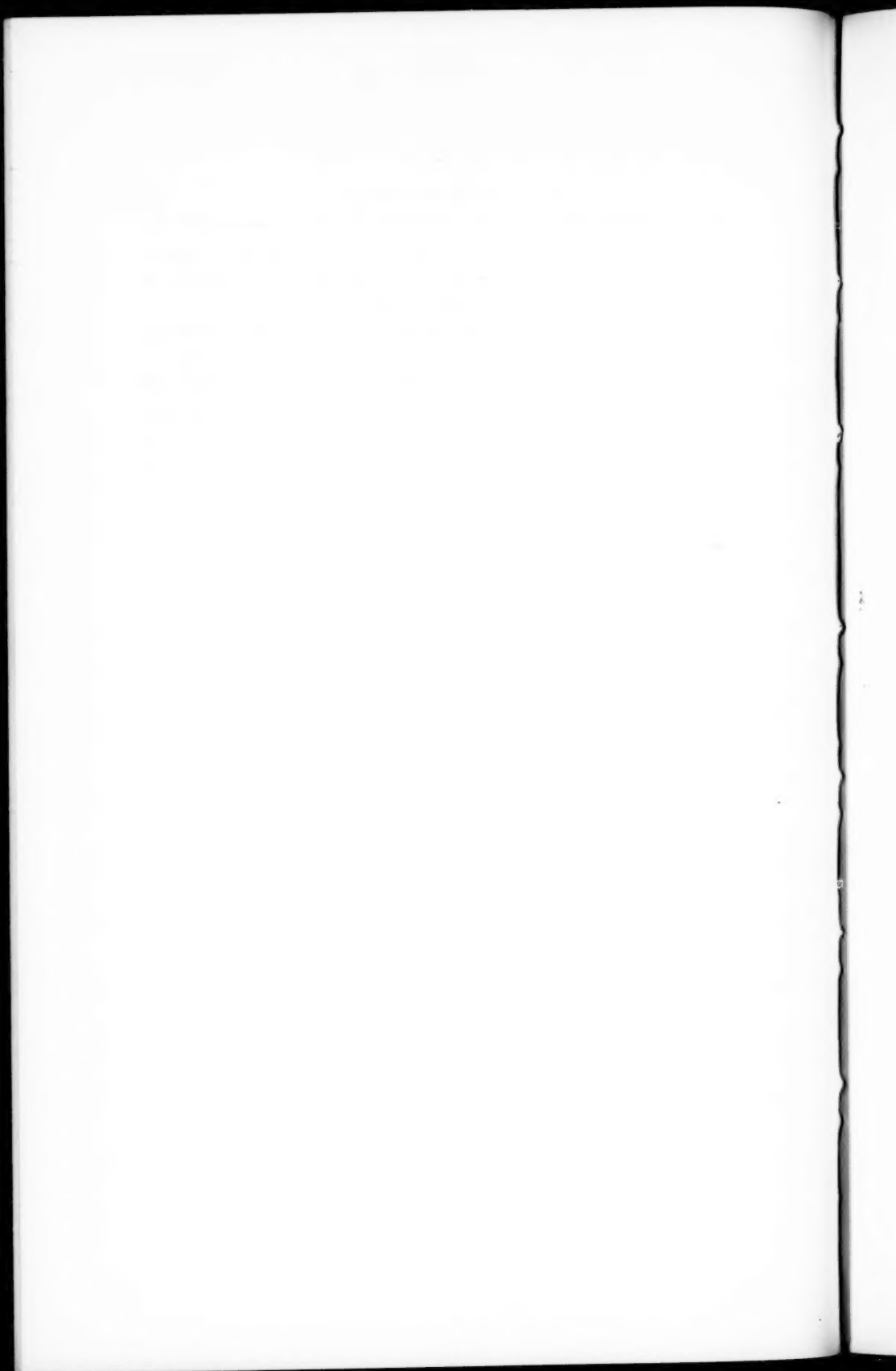
To my long letter dated Dec. 15, 1941 I was surprised to receive a very curt one in which Hanns Sachs stated that the middle part (p. 2) of my letter was missing. He hoped I could send him a copy.

I replied that if he turned over p. 1, he would find p. 2 on the backside; whereupon on Jan. 19th Hanns Sachs showed the form of a great editor:

"I found that I have persistently overlooked the back of the first page of your letter. I take this as a sign of my resistance against the telepathic aspect which evidently was a great deal stronger than the pretence of my 'impartiality' permitted me to see. However, I have brought things into the open now and hope that I will be able to profit by my new insight. As a fruit of it, I make you the offer to choose, as you think best, to have your article published as it stands. Or to bolster it with additional association material. When I get it in its final form, I will write a critical comment—on

general lines, which you will get in time to peruse and — I hope — to find it acceptable. . . I feel sure that you will be magnanimous and forgive my lapse from grace.”

As I look at the letter now — it is written in Hanns Sachs's own hand — I am struck by something peculiar. I wonder whether other correspondents of Hanns Sachs' had noticed it. When he writes of himself, in the first person, all his I-s are in small, with a dot over them (which permits no mistake). Surely, this is a sign of great humility, an essential quality of a great man that he was.



The Double Yardstick in Judging A Writer's Talent

by

Edmund Bergler, M.D.

While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

Samuel Johnson

An anonymous wit once claimed: "Genius is the talent of dead men." Johnson's statement, quoted above, points in the same direction, although it lays more specific stress on the technique of devaluation in use during an author's lifetime. These statements call attention to the fact that two different yardsticks determine the judgment of a writer, but make no attempt to provide an explanation.

There have, however, been many attempts to explain this truism. The simplest explanations ascribe the difference in attitude to the envy of the environment, or to the peculiarities of the genius. The former explanation is typified in Oscar Wilde's dictum: "The public is wonderfully tolerant; it forgives everything except genius." The latter has a host of sponsors:

"There are some bad qualities which make great talent."
(La Rochefoucauld)

"Talent is commonly developed at the expense of character, and the greater it grows, the more is the mischief and misleading." (Emerson)

"The truth is, as everyone knows, that the great artists of the world are never Puritans, and seldom if ever ordinarily

respectable. No virtuous man, that is, virtuous in the Y.M.C.A. sense, has ever painted a picture worth looking at, or written a symphony worth hearing, or a book worth reading, and it is highly improbable that the thing has ever been done by a virtuous woman." (Mencken)

While a writer of talent is living, he is viewed with suspicion: "The world has a standing pique against genius," complained Oscar Wilde. His peculiarities are emphasized: "If we are to have a genius we must put up with the inconveniences of genius, a thing the world will never do; it wants geniuses, but would like them just like other people," said George Moore. Because of his inner structure, the genius does not oblige: "Every man of genius sees the world at a different angle from his fellows, and there is his tragedy," declared Havelock Ellis.

All these and similar well-taken quotations are descriptive. They do not explain *why the death of the genius is the prerequisite for more objective evaluation.*

Posthumous justice presupposes forgiveness for being "different" or ahead of one's time. This leniency *transforms contemporary indignation into amusement or relish.* Metaphorically speaking, Shakespeare's only legacy to his wife — the bed — was first used as an argument demonstrating the genius' impossible behavior, and was later changed into an amusing story, viewed with condescending tolerance; the poet's homosexually tinged sonnets, at first indignantly rejected, subsequently became the object of a half-scandal, no longer seen as a scandal but as an amusing peculiarity. One can expect that still later students will flunk examinations because of their interpretations (correct or incorrect, as the prevailing professorial wind blows) of these very sonnets . . .

•

Death — or at least old age, meaning the imminence of death — is thus the prerequisite for the required switch from contemporary revengeful indignation into appreciation, coupled with the fond repetition of amusing anecdotes. This penalty has been exacted by successive generations with un-

failing exactitude.

The reason for this penalty is *the megalomania of the writer's contemporaries*. *Objectively*, the genius may be the genius; *subjectively*, he usurps a right which Tom, Dick and Harry bestowed upon themselves in early childhood. The mere existence of the genius activates the old, though never relinquished competition between the child and the adult who "knows everything." Growing up is the enticing prospect of outdoing the omniscient educator. This having failed, the genius becomes the standard-bearer of the unachievable, cloaked in the prerogatives of the adult as viewed from infantile vistas. That is "unforgivable." That is why the genius' "difference" is maliciously recorded, why his poor performances are magnified and his achievements belittled. This, too, accounts for the world's "standing pique against the genius."

When the death of the genius removes him from infantile competition, half-guilt is mobilized. His occasional poor performances are forgotten; his once devaluated triumphs are remembered. The price for this modicum of objectivity must always be the genius' death.

The prerequisite of death is complex: Because of infantile megalomania, the observer — in his guilt — acts as though he personally had killed the great man. This shifted guilt is accepted because it pertains to the *lesser* intrapsychic crime. The real guilt pertains to *the observer's own psychic masochism: the genius' greatness had pushed the child in the observer into the passive-masochistic position*. And this can never be forgiven!

The eighteenth-century master of aphorisms, the philosopher Lichtenberg, came nearest to the facts of the matter when (in another connection) he declared: "At least once a year everyone is a genius." This brings Tom, Dick and Harry into the orbit of genius — the megalomania stressed above. Small wonder that the pains of competition with the real genius can be extinguished only with his death, which ends his unwitting ability to tap the storehouse of repressed

psychic masochism in his contemporaries.

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